THE BOY ALLIES UNDER TWO FLAGS

By Ensign Robert L. Drake

THE TWO LADS, NOW CLINGING TO PIECES OF THE WRECKAGE CONTINUED AT THE MERCY OF THE SEA. *Page 26.*

The Boy Allies Under Two Flags.

The Boy Allies Under Two Flags

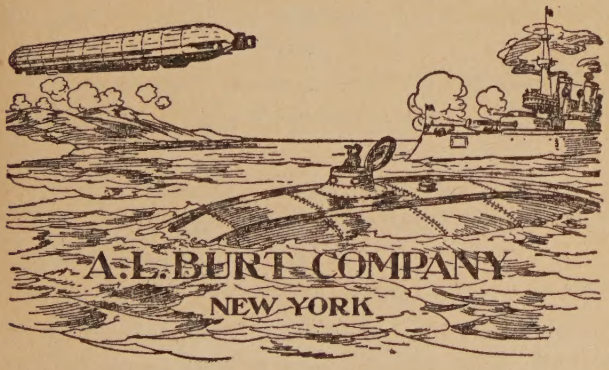
OR

Sweeping the Enemy from the Sea

By Ensign ROBERT L. DRAKE

AUTHOR OF

"The Boy Allies On the North Sea Patrol"
"The Boy Allies With the Terror of the Seas"
"The Boy Allies With the Flying Squadron"



A. L. BURT COMPANY
NEW YORK

Copyright, 1915
By A. L. Burt Company

THE BOY ALLIES UNDER TWO FLAGS

THE BOY ALLIES UNDER TWO FLAGS.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

"Boom! Boom!"

Thus spoke the two forward guns on the little scout cruiser—*H. M. S. Sylph,* Lord Hastings, commander.

"A hit!" cried Jack, who, from his position in the pilot house, had watched the progress of the missiles hurled at the foe.

"Good work!" shouted Frank, his excitement so great that he forgot the gunners were unable to hear him.

"Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!"

The *Sylph* had come about, and now poured a broadside into the enemy.

Then, from the distance, more than a mile across the water, came the sound of many guns. The German cruisers *Breslau* and *Goeben* were returning the fire.

Shells, dropping in front, behind and on all sides of the *Sylph,* threw up the water in mighty geysers, as if it were a typhoon that surrounded the little vessel. Shells screamed overhead, but none found its mark.

All this time the vessels were drawing closer and closer together. Now, as the little scout cruiser rose on a huge swell, a single shock shook the vessel, and a British shell sped true.

A portion of the *Breslau's* superstructure toppled; a second later and the faint sound of a crash was carried over the water to the *Sylph.*

"A hit!" cried Jack again.

A loud British cheer rose above the sound of battle, and the gunners, well pleased with their marksmanship, turned again to their work with renewed vigor.

"Lieutenant Templeton on the bridge!" came the command, and Jack hastened to report to Lord Hastings.

"What do you make of that last shot, Mr. Templeton?" demanded the commander of the *Sylph.* "Is the enemy seriously crippled, would you say?"

"No, sir," replied Jack. "I think not. You may see that the wreckage has already been cleared away, and the enemy is still plugging away at us."

"Mr. Hetherington!" called the commander.

The first lieutenant of the little vessel saluted.

"Yes, sir?"

"I fear the enemy is too strong for us, sir. You will have to bring the *Sylph* about."

"Very well, sir."

A moment later the head of the little scout cruiser began to swing gradually to the left.

Jack returned to the wheelhouse.

"What on earth are we coming about for?" demanded Frank, as his friend entered.

"Lord Hastings believes the enemy is too strong for us," was the other's reply.

"But that's no reason to run, is it?"

"I don't think so, but it appears that Lord Hastings does. I guess he knows more about it than we do."

"I guess that's so; but I don't like the idea of running."

"Nor I."

At this instant there was a hail from the lookout:

"Steamer on the port bow, sir!"

"What's her nationality?" bellowed Lord Hastings.

"British, sir," was the reply.

"Can you make her out?"

The lookout was silent for a moment, and then called back.

"Yes, sir; Cruiser *Gloucester,* sir!"

"Good!" shouted Lord Hastings. "Lieutenant Hetherington! Bring her about again!"

The *Sylph* came back to her course as if by magic,

and once more rushed toward the enemy. Several miles to port, could now be seen the faint outline of the approaching British battle cruiser, sailing swiftly, under full steam, as though she were afraid she would not arrive in time to take part in the battle.

"Full speed ahead!" came the order from the *Sylph's* commander, and the little craft leaped forward in the very face of her two larger enemies.

A shell from the *Goeben,* which was nearer the *Sylph* than her sister ship, crashed into the very mouth of one of the *Sylph's* 8-inch guns, blowing it to pieces.

Men were hurled to the deck on all sides, maimed and bleeding. Others dropped over dead. An officer hurriedly reported the fact to Lord Hastings.

"We'll get even with her," said His Lordship grimly. "Give her a shot from the forward turret."

In spite of the tragedy enacted before his eyes only a moment before, the British gunner took deliberate aim.

"Boom!"

There was silence, as all watched the effect of this one shot.

"Right below the water line," said Lord Hastings calmly. "A pretty shot, my man."

By this time the *Gloucester* had come within striking distance, and her heavy guns began to breathe defiance to the Germans. But the *Breslau* and the

Goeben had no mind to engage this new enemy, and quickly turned tail and fled.

Lord Hastings immediately got into communication with the captain of the *Gloucester* by wireless.

"Pursue the enemy!" was the order that was flashed through the air.

The two British ships sped forward on the trail of the foe. But the latter made off at top speed, and in spite of the shells hurled at them by their pursuers, soon outdistanced the *Gloucester*. The *Sylph*, however, continued the chase, and was gradually gaining, although, now that the battle was over for the time being, the strain on the little cruiser relaxed. Wounded men were hurriedly patched up by the ship's surgeon and his assistants, and the dead were prepared for burial.

Jack and Frank approached Lord Hastings on the bridge. The latter was talking to his first officer.

"They must be the *Breslau* and *Goeben*," he was saying, "though I am unable to account for the manner in which they escaped the blockade at Libau. They were supposed to be tightly bottled up there, and I was informed that their escape was impossible."

"Something has evidently gone wrong," suggested Lieutenant Hetherington.

"They probably escaped by a ruse of some kind," said Jack, joining in the conversation.

And the lad was right, although he did not know it then.

The two German ships, tightly bottled up, even as Lord Hastings had said, in Libau, had escaped the blockading British squadron by the simple maneuver of reversing their lights, putting their bow lights aft and *vice versa,* and passing through the blockading fleet in the night without so much as being challenged. This is history.

"Well," said Frank, "we succeeded in putting our mark on them, even if we didn't catch them."

"We did that," agreed Lieutenant Hetherington.

Darkness fell, and still the chase continued; but the *Sylph* was unable to come up with her quarry, and the two German cruisers succeeded in limping off in the night.

"We shall have to give it up," said Lord Hastings, when he at last realized that the Germans had escaped. "Mr. Hetherington, bring the ship back to its former course."

The lieutenant did as ordered.

"Now, boys," said Lord Hastings, "you might as well turn in for the night."

A few minutes later the lads were fast asleep in their own cabin, and while they gain a much needed rest and the *Sylph* continues to speed on her course, it will be a good time to introduce the two young lads to such readers as have not met them before.

CHAPTER II.

TWO FRIENDS.

FRANK CHADWICK was an American lad, some 18 years old. In Europe when the great European war broke out, he succeeded, with his father, in getting over the border into Italy, finally reaching Naples.

Here the lad lost his father, and while searching for him, had gone to the aid of a man apparently near death at the hands of a sailor. After thanking the lad for his timely aid, the man had immediately shanghaied the lad, who, when he recovered consciousness, found himself aboard a little schooner, sailing for he knew not where.

There was a mutiny on the ship and the captain was killed. The mutineers, putting in at a little African village for supplies, attempted to fleece Jack Templeton, an English youth. out of his just dues. Jack, a strapping youngster, strong as an ox, though no older than Frank, succeeded in getting aboard the mutineers' vessel, and by displaying wonderful strategy and fighting prowess, overcame the mutineers.

The boys became great friends.

After capturing the schooner from the mutineers, a prisoner was found on board, who proved to be a

British secret service agent. The boys released him, and then, with Lord Hastings, who had come to Africa in his yacht, succeeded in striking such a blow at the Triple Alliance that Italy refused to throw her support to German arms in spite of the strongest pressure the Kaiser could bring to bear.

So valuable was the service the boys rendered in this matter, that when they expressed their intentions of joining the British navy, Lord Hastings, who had taken an immense liking to them, secured them commissions as midshipmen. Later they were assigned to duty on his yacht, the *Sylph,* which, in the meantime, had been converted into a scout cruiser.

The lads had already played an important part in the war. Through them, a plot to destroy the whole British fleet had been frustrated and the English had been enabled to deliver a smashing blow to the German fleet at Heligoland.

In Lord Hastings the boys had found an excellent friend. Although apparently but a commander of a small scout cruiser—unknown to but a very few—he was one of the most trusted of British secret agents. He was a distant relative of the English monarch and, as the boys had already learned, had more power in naval affairs than his officers and associates surmised. This fact had been proved more than once, when he had given commands to men apparently much higher in rank.

Following the brilliant victory of the British fleet off Heligoland, in which a number of the Kaiser's most powerful sea fighters had been sent to the bottom, the *Sylph* had returned to London for repairs. Here Frank and Jack had been personally presented to King George, who had thanked them for their bravery and loyalty and raised them to the rank of Fourth Lieutenant.

Lord Hastings had been ill, but his illness had been of short duration; and so it was not long before the two lads once more found themselves pacing the deck of the *Sylph,* going they knew not where; nor did they care much, so long as it took them where there was fighting to be done.

It was on the very day that the *Sylph* lifted anchor for her second cruise, that London heard of the prowess of the German cruiser *Emden,* a swift raider which later caused so much damage to British shipping as to gain the name "Terror of the Sea." The news received on the day in question told of the sinking of an English liner by this powerful enemy.

When Frank and Jack sought to learn the destination of the *Sylph* from Lord Hastings, he had put them off with a laugh.

"You'll know soon enough," he said with a wave of his hand.

"Are we likely to see action soon?" asked Jack.

"If we are fortunate," was the reply.

"Well, that's all we wanted to know," said Frank.

"Don't worry," replied His Lordship. "You will see all the action you want before this cruise is over, or I am very badly mistaken."

And with this the boys were forced to be content.

For two days they sailed about in the sunny Mediterranean, sighting neither friend nor foe, and then suddenly had encountered the two German cruisers, the *Breslau* and the *Goeben,* and the skirmish with these two ships, described at the opening of this story, ensued.

But now, as the enemy had succeeded in making off in the darkness, and as Lord Hastings had ordered that the original course of the *Sylph* be resumed, the little vessel was again—as Jack said when they had started on their journey—"sailing under sealed orders."

The two lads were about bright and early the morning following the encounter with the German cruisers; and as they stood looking out over the sea, Lord Hastings approached them.

"More news of the *Emden,*" he said, as he came up.

"Another British merchant vessel sunk?" asked Jack.

"Worse," replied Lord Hastings. "A cruiser this time!"

"A cruiser!" exclaimed Jack in surprise. "I al-

ways thought that any cruiser of ours was more than a match for a German."

"Well, you are wrong," was Lord Hastings' reply. "From what I have heard by wireless, our vessel attacked, but was sent to the bottom by the *Emden* before she could do much damage to the German."

"What was the name of the British ship?" asked Frank.

"I haven't heard," replied Lord Hastings; "but the action was fought in the Indian Ocean."

"It seems to me," said Jack vehemently, "that it is about time this German terror of the sea was sent to the bottom."

"So it is," declared Lord Hastings; "and mark my words, she will be when one of our big ships comes up with her."

"May it be soon!" ejaculated Frank.

But it was not to be soon. For almost another month the German terror prowled about the seas, causing great havoc to British and French merchantmen.

For three days the *Sylph* continued on her way without interruption, and then turned about suddenly and headed for home. Under full speed she ran for days, until the boys knew they were once more in the North Sea, where they had so recently participated in their one great battle.

"Will you tell us why we have come back so suddenly, sir?" asked Frank of Lord Hastings.

"Why," said His Lordship, "the Germans seem to be growing extremely active in the North Sea. Only three days ago, a German submarine, after apparently running the blockade, sank the cruiser *Hawke* off the coast of Scotland.

"What?" cried both boys in one voice.

"Exactly," said Lord Hastings grimly, "and it is for the purpose of attempting to discover some of these under-the-sea fighters, or other German warships, that we have come back. The whole North Sea is being patrolled, and we are bound to come upon some of the Germans eventually."

"Well, I hope we don't have to wait long," said Frank.

"And so do I," agreed Jack. "I hope that every German ship afloat will be swept from the seas."

The *Sylph* did not go within sight of the English coast, but for two days cruised back and forth, east, west, north and south, without the sight of the enemy.

This inaction soon began to pall upon the two lads, to whom a fight was as the breath of life itself.

"I wish we had continued on our way, wherever we were going, and not have come back here," said Jack to Frank one afternoon.

"This is about the limit," agreed Frank. "I believe we would have done better to have joined the army. At least we would have seen some fighting.

We wouldn't have been lying about idle all the time."

"That's so," said Jack; "but just the same, when we do have a fight, it's a real one. One thing about a sea battle, you can always tell the winner. Claims of both sides that they are still holding their ground don't go on sea. Somebody gets licked."

"Right you are," said Frank, "and the sooner we get to work on some big German the better I shall be satisfied."

Lord Hastings came on deck a few moments later and engaged the boys in conversation, when the wireless operator approached with a message. Lord Hastings took the paper extended to him, and read aloud:

"Four German torpedo destroyers near. Be on the lookout, and inform me when you have sighted them."

The message was signed by Captain Cecil H. Fox, commanding *H. M. S. Undaunted.*

CHAPTER III.

AVENGING THE HAWKE.

QUICKLY Lord Hastings dispatched an answer to Captain Fox, and then turned to Jack and Frank.

"I guess your desire to see more action will be gratified soon," he said quietly.

All that night the *Sylph* continued to cruise slowly about. With the break of day, Lord Hastings, Frank, Jack and Lieutenant Hetherington were again on the bridge.

"Where do you make our position, sir?" asked Lieutenant Hetherington of Lord Hastings.

"Off the coast of Holland," replied the commander of the *Sylph*.

Suddenly there came a cry from the lookout.

"Four vessels off the starboard bow, sir!"

Quickly all on the bridge leveled their glasses in the direction indicated. At first all that could be seen were faint clouds of smoke rising over the horizon; then, gradually, one by one, four vessels—at first but specks in the distance—came into view.

Lord Hastings gazed at them long and carefully.

"Germans," he said at last, very quietly.

He sent this message to the captain of the *Undaunted:*

"Have sighted enemy; four vessels; approaching rapidly," and the exact position of the *Sylph.*

In a moment came the answer:

"Head north, slowly. We will intercept the enemy when actively engaged. Remember the *Hawke!*"

Lord Hastings sent another message:

"How many are you?"

"Five," came back the answer. "*Undaunted* accompanied by torpedo destroyers *Lance, Lenox, Legion* and *Loyal,* as convoys."

"Good!" muttered Lord Hastings; then turned to Lieutenant Hetherington:

"You may clear for action, sir!"

The gallant British sailors jumped quickly to their posts, the light of battle in their eager eyes. At Lord Hastings' command, the *Sylph* was brought about, and soon had her stern toward the enemy.

There came a wireless message from the German commander.

"Surrender!" it said.

"We will die first!" was the answer sent by Lord Hastings.

Steaming slowly, the *Sylph* apparently was trying to escape; at least so figured the German commander. To him it appeared that he could overtake the little vessel with ease, and his squadron steamed swiftly after it.

Gradually the Germans gained upon the little ves-

sel, finally coming close enough to send a shot after it. They were not yet within range, however, and the shell fell short.

"We'll have to let him get a little closer," muttered Lord Hastings, "or he may draw off. We'll have to face the danger of a shell striking us."

A second shell from the Germans kicked up the water alongside the *Sylph*.

"He'll have the range in a minute, sir," said Lieutenant Hetherington.

"Bear off a little to the south," was the commander's reply.

For almost an hour the Sylph outmaneuvered the German flotilla, and avoided being struck. All this time Lord Hastings was in constant wireless communication with the *Undaunted,* which was even now coming to give battle to the Germans.

At last the lookout made them out.

"Battle fleet——" he began, but Lord Hastings' keen eye had already perceived what the lookout would have told him.

Well to the rear, perhaps three miles north, came the British cruiser *Undaunted* and her four convoys. They were steaming rapidly and in such a direction that they would intercept the Germans should the latter attempt to return in the direction from which they had come.

To escape, the Germans must come directly toward the *Sylph*. Those on board the *Sylph* no-

ticed a sudden slackening in the speed of the German squadron.

"They have sighted our fleet, sir," said Jack, who had stood impatiently on the bridge while all this maneuvering was going on.

"So they have," said Lord Hastings, and then turned to Lieutenant Hetherington. "You may bring the *Sylph* about sir," he said quietly.

Swiftly the little scout cruiser turned her face directly toward the enemy, who even now had turned to escape toward the south, at the same time heading so they would pass the *Sylph* at the distance of perhaps a mile.

"Full speed ahead!" came the command on the *Sylph*.

The little vessel darted forward at an angle that would cut off the Germans in the flight. It was a desperate venture, and none, perhaps, realized it more than did Lord Hastings; but he was not the man to see the prey escape thus easily if he could help it.

Rapidly now the *Sylph* drew closer to the German torpedo destroyers. The gunners were at their posts, the range finder already had gauged the distance, medical supplies for the wounded were ready for instant use. In fact, the *Sylph* was ready to give battle, regardless of the number of her enemies.

There was a loud crash as the first salvo burst

from the Germans, but the *Sylph* was untouched. Still the British ship drew nearer without firing. Then Lord Hastings gave the command:

"Mr. Hetherington, you may fire at will!"

The *Sylph* seemed to leap into the air at the shock of the first fire. One shell crashed into the side of one of the German destroyers, and a cheer went up from the British. Then came several broadsides from the Germans, who had stopped now to dispose of this brave little vessel, before continuing their flight.

Suddenly the *Sylph* staggered, and her fire became less frequent. A German shell had struck her forward turret with terrible force, putting her biggest gun out of commission. But the *Sylph* recovered, and continued to fight on.

Jack and Frank darted hither and thither about the vessel, carrying orders from Lord Hastings and Lieutenant Hetherington, now and then taking a man's place at one of the guns as he toppled over, until another relieved them.

Two distinct shocks told that the *Sylph* had been struck twice more. Then Lord Hastings gave the command for his vessel to withdraw.

In attacking the enemy as he had, in the face of terrible odds, he had accomplished his purpose. He had halted the Germans in their attempt to escape, and had given the *Undaunted* and the British torpedo boats time to come up.

Before the Germans could again get under full headway, there came the heavy boom of a great gun. The *Undaunted* was within range, and had opened fire.

Lord Hastings summoned Jack to him.

"What damage do you find to the *Sylph?*" he asked.

"Forward gun out of commission, sir," replied the lad. "Ten men killed, and many wounded."

Frank also had bad news to report.

The British flotilla and the German squadron were now at it hammer and tongs. Seeing that all hope of escape had been cut off, the German commander turned to face his new foes, determined to give battle to the last.

Steadily the British fleet bore down on the enemy, the great guns of the *Undaunted* belching fire as they drew near.

Now Lord Hastings ordered the *Sylph*—still the closest of the British vessels to the Germans—again into the fray, and in spite of its crippled condition, the little cruiser once more bore down upon the Germans.

Suddenly the nearest German destroyer launched a torpedo at the *Sylph*. By a quick and skillful maneuver, Lord Hastings avoided this projectile, and a broadside was poured into the German.

Others of the German fleet were too closely pressed by the *Undaunted* and her convoys to aid

the one engaged with the *Sylph,* and so the two were left to fight it out alone.

Closer and closer together the two vessels came, until they were perhaps only a hundred yards apart. It was evident to those on the *Sylph* that a shell must have badly crippled the German, for otherwise a torpedo would have put an end to the little British craft.

Unable to check the advance of the *Sylph,* the German destroyer turned suddenly and made off.

"After her!" shouted Lord Hastings, and the *Sylph* leaped ahead at the word of command.

CHAPTER IV.

SAVED FROM THE SEA.

THE three other German vessels now singled out the *Undaunted* and concentrated their fire upon her, thinking first to dispose of the more formidable vessel and then to turn their attention to the lighter craft.

A fierce duel ensued. Suddenly there was a terrific explosion. One of the German torpedo destroyers seemed to leap into the air, only to fall back a moment later and disappear beneath the sea with a loud hiss.

A heavy shell struck the *Undaunted* and carried away part of her superstructure. The two remaining torpedo boats of the enemy, except the one being pursued by the *Sylph,* suddenly turned and dashed directly at the *Undaunted,* evidently intending to ram her.

Captain Fox avoided a collision with promptness and skill, and the torpedo boats sped by without touching her. Now the *Loyal* launched a torpedo at the first German craft. It sped swift and true, and a moment later there was but one German left in condition to continue the fight.

Thinking to avoid unnecessary loss of life, Captain Fox called upon the German to surrender. The kindly offer was rewarded with a defiant reply, and the German made another swift attack upon the *Undaunted.*

For a moment it seemed that a collision was unavoidable, but Captain Fox managed to get his ship out of the way just as the enemy plowed by. It was close work and required great coolness.

Meantime the *Sylph* was close on the heels of the other German vessel. Salvo after salvo the British poured into the apparently helpless German torpedo boat, which, however, continued its flight rather than surrender.

Frank and Jack, both happening to be on the bridge at the same moment, stood for a brief second to watch the effect of the *Sylph's* fire. The damage to the German had been terrific. The vessel listed badly, and seemed in imminent danger of sinking.

"By Jove!" ejaculated Jack, and would have said more but for a sudden interruption.

There was a terrific explosion on the German vessel, and as if by magic, it disappeared beneath the sea. The *Sylph's* battle was over.

"Get out the boats, men!" came Lord Hastings' command. "It may be that we can save some of them."

Jack and Frank leaped quickly into the same boat, and a moment later were rushing to the spot where

the German torpedo destroyer had disappeared. For perhaps five minutes they cruised about, unable to find a single survivor, and then both were startled by the sound of something whistling overhead.

Looking up they beheld the cause of this trouble. The last German destroyer had come almost upon them, and the British gunners, evidently not seeing the little boat, were continuing their fire at the enemy.

The lads were in imminent danger of being struck by a British shell. The German launched a torpedo, and it went skimming right by the little boat in which the boys sat.

"Quick!" cried Jack. "We must get out of here or one of those things will hit us."

The men bent to their oars; but they were not quick enough. Struck by some missile, the boat suddenly sank beneath them, and the boys found themselves in the water, swimming.

And still they were between the two fighting ships.

Looking over his shoulder, Jack could make out the *Sylph,* and calling to Frank to follow him, he struck out in that direction.

They swam rapidly, but seemed to make little progress. Lord Hastings, standing on the bridge of the *Sylph,* discovered the two forms in the water. A second boat was hastily launched, and put off toward them.

When it was within a few yards of them a fragment of a shell struck it and it also disappeared. It went to the bottom with all on board, nor did any of its ill-fated victims come to the surface again.

The two lads, now clinging to pieces of wreckage, continued at the mercy of the sea, and also in constant danger of being struck by an exploding shell, while they swam slowly toward the *Sylph.*

In one final despairing attempt to sink the *Undaunted,* the last German destroyer launched another torpedo. By a wonderful maneuver the British cruiser again avoided the projectile, which sped on through the water.

Swimming, the boys could plainly follow its flight. As the *Undaunted* swung out of the way to avoid it they could see that the missile had a clear path to the *Sylph.*

With a gasp the boys saw the torpedo speed toward the little scout cruiser. Lord Hastings had not seen the projectile launched—because a view of the German ship had been obstructed until the *Undaunted* swung out of the way—and no effort was made to avoid it.

The torpedo crashed into the *Sylph* on the water line, and the explosion which followed must have torn through all the various compartments to the engine room, for there was a second loud explosion, steam leaped up on all sides of the *Sylph,* and when it had cleared away, there was no *Sylph* to be seen.

The little scout cruiser had disappeared; vanished; had been destroyed.

Of Lord Hastings and the other officers and men, the lads could see nothing.

For a moment the boys were unable to speak, so astounded were they at the suddenness of this terrible disaster.

"Great Scott!" gasped Frank at last. "Do you realize what has happened?"

Jack was more calm.

"Perfectly," he replied faintly, with a sob in his voice. "The *Sylph* has gone, and with her Lord Hastings and all on board—all our friends, the only ones we have in the world."

The two boys unconsciously swam closer together.

"The fortunes of war," said Jack, more quietly now. "It is a terrible thing."

Further conversation was interrupted by the sound of another terrific explosion. Startled, the boys turned in the water just in time to see the last German destroyer disappear beneath the sea.

"Good!" exclaimed Jack, in fierce joy. "I am glad of that."

Frank also gritted his teeth, and muttered fervent congratulations to the British gunners.

And now the British ships proceeded on their course. None had been seriously damaged. They turned their backs upon the scene of the engage-

ment and made off in the direction from which they had come.

The boys shouted loud and long for assistance; but their cries were not heard aboard the British ships of war, which, gradually gathering more headway, steamed off to the south. Not until they were almost out of sight did the lads cease their shouting, and resign themselves to their fate.

In despair, they turned to each other for comfort. Jack was first to speak.

"Well, Frank," he said quietly. "We shall soon join Lord Hastings and our other good friends in a place where there is no war and no losing of friends."

"Isn't there something we can do?" asked Frank, trembling with cold.

"I am afraid not."

There was a sudden stirring of the water beneath them. Jack cried out suddenly:

"What's that?"

Frank had regained his coolness now.

"Probably a shark come to finish us up quickly," he replied calmly.

Both lads, with a last effort, swam desperately from the place.

But suddenly the waters of the North Sea parted, and a long, cigar-shaped object came to the top and rested lightly on the water.

"What is it?" asked Jack again in no little alarm.

Before Frank could reply, a man suddenly appeared on the top of the object, apparently from nowhere, and glanced about. He espied them, and as suddenly disappeared. He reappeared almost in an instant, however, followed by another.

And now both lads discovered what the object was, an object that had arrived just in time to save them from a watery grave. They could see that the two men wore the uniform of the German navy.

The long, cigar-shaped object was a German submarine.

CHAPTER V.

ABOARD THE X-9.

THERE was a hoarse command from aboard the submarine, and a moment later a small boat floated alongside the two German officers who clambered in. Frank and Jack swam toward them as rapidly as their exhausted condition would permit.

"What are you two lads doing here in the middle of the North Sea?" asked one of the officers in great surprise, after the boys had been pulled aboard the small boat.

"We're here because our ship was sunk by one of your blamed torpedo boats," replied Jack, with some heat.

"Only one sunk?" inquired the officer in excellent English.

"Just one; it seems to me that is enough."

"Well, I agree that it is better than none," said the German officer. "We'll sink them one at a time. How many of our ships engaged you?"

"Four," replied Jack briefly, now beginning to smile to himself, for he saw the German did not know what had happened.

"Which way did they go?" demanded the German.

"Straight to the bottom," replied Jack, with a note of thankfulness in his voice.

"What!" exclaimed the officer, starting to his feet.

"To the bottom," Jack repeated.

"Impossible!" cried the officer. "One British ship couldn't sink four German torpedo destroyers."

"I didn't say there was only one," said Jack. "We had some assistance."

"You must have had," said the German officer heatedly. "How many? A dozen?"

"There were two or three," said Jack briefly, for he had no mind to tell the German officer the size of the British squadron.

The German officer was silent for several minutes, and then he said:

"Why didn't you tell me this in the first place?"

"You didn't ask me," replied Jack, with a tantalizing laugh.

The German brought his right fist into the palm of his left hand with a resounding smack.

"You English will pay dearly for every German ship sunk," he exclaimed.

"Maybe so," replied Jack, dryly, "but it won't be a German fleet that makes us pay."

"Enough of this!" broke in the second German officer. "Lieutenant Stein, you forget yourself, sir. And as for you, sir," turning to Jack, "you show no better taste."

"I beg your pardon," said Jack. "I wouldn't have said anything if he hadn't egged me on."

Lieutenant Stein was equally repentent.

"I apologize," he said quietly to Jack. "I should not have spoken as I did."

"Say no more about it," said Jack. "I was just as much to blame."

Frank now broke into the conversation.

"What vessel is this?" he asked, pointing to the low-lying hulk of the submarine, against which the small boat now scraped.

"German submarine X-9," replied Lieutenant Stein, "where, until we put into port again, you will be our prisoners."

The four now clambered to the top of the submarine. Lieutenant Stein led the way to the entrance through the combined bridge and conning tower, and all went below. At the foot of the short flight of steps stood a man in captain's uniform.

"The sole survivors of a British cruiser, sir," said Lieutenant Stein to the captain, indicating the two lads. "I have not learned their names nor rank."

The two lads hastened to introduce themselves.

"I am Captain von Cromp, commander of this vessel," said the captain gruffly. "You are my prisoners until I put into port and can turn you over to the proper authorities."

Jack and Frank bowed in recognition of their fate. The captain turned to Lieutenant Stein.

"You will see that the prisoners are well cared for," he said. "They are in your custody."

The lads glanced curiously about as they were led along toward the lieutenant's cabin. It was the first time either had been inside a submarine vessel, and both felt a trifle squeamish. The boat was upon the surface of the sea now, however, and a dim light penetrated below.

The lieutenant's cabin, well forward, was fitted up luxuriously. There were several bunks in the little room, and the lieutenant motioned to them.

"You will sleep there," he said quietly. "Make yourselves perfectly at home. I guess there is no danger of your attempting to escape. However, you must remain below and not ascend to the bridge under any circumstances."

He bowed, and left them.

"I don't know as I am particularly fond of this kind of travel," Frank confided to Jack. "It's all right as long as we remain on the surface, but I'll bet it would feel queer to be moving along under the water."

"Right you are," replied Jack. "However, we are here and we shall have to make the best of a bad situation. Then, too, perhaps we can learn something that may prove of use to us later on."

The lads dined that night at the officers' mess and became quite well acquainted with all of them. They found Captain von Cromp not half so gruff

as he had been when they first came aboard. They were questioned about the service they had seen, and their story greatly surprised all the officers.

Upon Lieutenant Stein's request, the commander granted the lads permission to look over the vessel. The lieutenant showed them how the vessel was submerged, by allowing one of the tanks to fill with water; how it rose again by forcing the water from the compartment by means of compressed air; how the air was purified when a lengthy submersion was necessary, and how the vessel was handled in times of action.

He showed them the periscope, and allowed them to peer through, although there was no need to use this, as the vessel was above water.

"When the submarine is submerged," explained Lieutenant Stein, "the periscope is the eye of the vessel. Peering over the waves, it reflects what it sees into the watching human eye in the conning tower. Destroy it, and the submarine is a blind thing, plunging to destruction."

"Then the periscope is the one weak spot in a submarine?" asked Frank.

"Exactly," was the reply. "Of course, if it were destroyed, the vessel might rise immediately to the surface and so gain its bearings. But in the midst of battle it would probably mean certain destruction; for when it rose the submarine would naturally

be so close to the enemy that a single big shell would put it out of business."

The boys looked long at this strange mechanical eye. Shaped like a small pipe, it ran up from the conning tower and protruded above the vessel. A large lens at the top turned off as does an elbow in a stove pipe. This portion, when necessary, moved in all directions. When raised to its maximum height everything within a radius of ten miles is reflected in it.

"The shaft can be lowered to within a few inches of the top of the water," the lieutenant explained, "thus guarding against the danger of being hit. The officer in the conning tower peers into the binoculars and sees just what the periscope sees."

"Will you explain just how it works?" asked Jack.

"Certainly. The periscope consists, as you may see, of a slender tubular shaft extending up through the conning tower of the submarine. Each submarine is equipped with a pair—thus if one is shot away the other can be put in immediate use. At the upper end of the shaft is a mirror lens. Upon this mirror lens is reflected the surrounding surface of the ocean. The image reflected there is carried down the tube to other lenses and then conveyed to enlarging binoculars. Now do you understand?"

"Perfectly," replied Jack; "and now as to the

manner in which a submarine fights. It is by torpedoes, as I understand it."

"Exactly," replied the lieutenant, "and the torpedo is the most deadly, effective and, it may be also said, intelligent of modern warfare. One torpedo, striking the right kind of a blow, can destroy a battleship. The submarine has no other effective weapon than the torpedo, which is delivered from a small tube. There is this advantage in favor of the battleship, however: the submarine is a slow craft. It is slower than the slowest battleship when it proceeds under water. When it gets to the surface its speed is doubled, but then it is an easy target for the guns of the threatened battleship and also for the swift torpedo boats and torpedo destroyers which are always thrown out as escorts when a submarine attack is anticipated. Some submarines are equipped with light rapid-firing guns, but these are of no more use in attacking on-water boats than would be a popgun. Do I make myself clear?"

"Perfectly," said Jack.

"It is indeed interesting," said Frank. "Can you tell us more?"

The lieutenant continued:

"Beyond these factors—the superior speed, the protection of torpedo boats and the weakness of the periscope—there has been no protection yet devised against the attack of a submarine."

"But the torpedo nets——" interrupted Frank.

"There is of course," the lieutenant went on, "a crudely defensive measure called the torpedo net. These are meshes of strong steel which are dropped down from the side of the warship and are supposed to catch the torpedo before it hits the side of the ship."

"Well, don't they?" asked Frank.

"In theory," said the lieutenant, "the torpedo explodes within the net and the force of its attack is more or less diminished. As a matter of fact, however, torpedo nets are not dependable. Why, most of our submarines are equipped with a formidable device for cutting these nets. This device, in one form, resembles an enormous pair of sheers which cut through the nets like paper. In another form they are equipped with powerful tearing arms which drag the net away and expose the sides of the battleship to the deadly messenger from the torpedo tube. Am I tiring you?"

"I should say not," replied both lads in one breath, and Frank added: "I don't just understand how a submarine sinks and rises."

"It's very simple," said the lieutenant, "and at the same time I'll tell you something else. The submarine is unaffected by tempests, and for this reason also is more deadly than a battleship. The submarine can dive down into the depths where there is no movement of the waves, and it can remain under water for fourteen hours continuously. This

is accomplished by tanks which can be filled with water and, overcoming what is known as the 'margin of buoyancy,' submerge the vessel. The air is replenished by special purifying devices and by tanks of oxygen. When the vessel wants to rise, it simply pumps out the water from the tanks."

"It certainly is a wonderful invention," said Frank, when the lieutenant had concluded his explanation.

"Indeed it is," agreed Jack.

"You should be aboard when we are in action," smiled the lieutenant. "I am sure you would be greatly interested."

"I don't doubt it," said Jack, "although from what you have told us regarding the deadliness of submarines, I believe that I should rather witness action on a British submarine."

"Nevertheless," said the lieutenant, "you are likely to see action aboard the X-9, for I do not believe Captain Von Cromp will return to port until he has at least tried the effect of his torpedoes on a ship or so of your countrymen."

"May he go to defeat if he tries it!" said Jack fervently.

"In which case," said the lieutenant with good-natured tolerance, "you would undoubtedly go with us."

"Even so," replied Jack, "I still could not wish to see you get away."

The lieutenant glanced at him admiringly.

"I believe you mean it," he said. "You are a brave lad. But come, we had all better turn in now."

"I guess you are right," said Frank; "and thanks for the trouble you have taken to explain all this to us."

"It was a pleasure, I am sure," was the lieutenant's reply, and they all made their way to the officer's cabin, where they prepared to retire for the night.

CHAPTER VI.

UNDER THE SEA.

But there was to be no sleep for any aboard the German submarine X-9 that night. As the boys were just about to tumble into their bunks, there was the sound of a sudden commotion on the vessel.

Lieutenant Stein sprang to his feet, hastily donned what few clothes he had removed, and dashed from the cabin. With all possible haste, the boys followed suit.

Men were rushing to and fro and no one heeded the boys' presence, although they were rudely thrust aside by hurrying members of the crew several times.

"Wonder what's up?" said Jack.

"Don't know," replied Frank, "unless they have sighted one of our ships."

"By Jove! Let us hope not," breathed Jack.

But this was indeed the cause of the excitement aboard the submarine. A British battleship had been sighted in the distance, and Captain Von Cromp was preparing to attack the unsuspecting vessel, which had failed to sight her enemy, although the latter was fully exposed to view.

Frank and Jack approached the foot of the periscope, where they stood awaiting developments.

Outside a sudden storm swept the water of the North Sea in angry waves. The water lifted up the little vessel with the regular motion of a high-running sea. All was pitch dark.

The fact that men were hurrying about on deck, was only shown by the somber figures who now and then passed in front of a single lantern. From out the engine room, already under water, arose the sound of heavy pounding and the weird crackling of the engines, as they were tried out.

Jack glanced at his watch. It was 10:30. Suddenly there came a shrill whistle from the little bridge of the submarine, standing high above the vessel, and covered with heavy canvass. The officer in command, Captain Von Cromp himself, dressed in heavy oilskins, raised a hand, the signal to go ahead.

A short, sharp signal to the engine room, a loud whirr of the motor, and the X-9 was speeding ahead. On both sides of the ship long waves formed, shimmering with light foam in the blackness of the sea. The X-9 moved westerly—toward the still unsuspecting battleship.

The heavens were covered with clouds. Not a star was visible. It was impossible to see more than a few feet away from the strange craft. Cap-

tain Von Cromp, with his experienced eye, tried in vain to penetrate through this wall of solid blackness. The wind kicked up the sea and the bridge was entirely flooded with water. There was not a sound to be heard, save the heavy droning of the motor and the swish of the water passing along the sides.

Suddenly, in the near distance, loomed up a great gray bulk, swinging high above the submarine upon the water. It was the British battleship.

And now submarine X-9 had been discovered. A heavy boom rang out, but the little craft was not damaged.

Another signal came to the ears of the two boys. Men rushed upon deck and soon the submarine was prepared for action. The flagpole was taken down. Part of the bridge was folded together and securely fastened. The periscope was fixed at its proper height. Then the entrance through the combined bridge and conning tower was hermetically sealed. A moment more and the tanks were opened, telling the lads that the submarine was about to submerge. The gasoline motors stopped their endless song. From now on electricity would drive the vessel forward.

Near Frank and Jack, at the periscope, stood Lieutenant Stein, looking at the British ship. The sailors took their stations near the torpedoes. The interior of the boat was now lighted with two

small electric bulbs. They made the darkness visible, but gave no light outside. Everywhere was the stale smell of oil. The boys found it impossible to speak to each other because of the noise of the engine and the water. The heat was oppressive.

From time to time the officer in command of the three torpedoes looked at his watch or at the compass, both of which he carried around his wrist. Intently the men all watched the signboard on the wall in front of them. The storm without made itself felt even in the depth. Every motion of the water caused the submarine to rock up and down and up and down again.

Jack found himself thinking of the advantage of the man on board a warship. He, at least, could go down with a last look at the world about him. Below, nothing could be seen, nothing could be heard. If the submarine went down, all would suffocate in the darkness beneath the water.

It was plain to Jack that Frank, as well as all the sailors and officers, was thinking along similar lines. The expression on all faces was plain proof of it.

Suddenly the sailors sprang forward, forgetting in an instant heat, bad air and discomfort. Following the gaze of the sailors, the lads turned their eyes to the signboard. There, as if by magic, had sprung up the word:

"Attention!"

The officer in command of the torpedoes had his

hand on the lever which would release the first deadly projectile—already in the tube. The sailors made ready to launch the second as soon as the first was gone.

Several seconds passed. Frank and Jack stood in deathlike stillness. Both realized the tragedy that was about to be enacted, and both were aware of their powerlessness to avert it.

Into the minds of both flashed a thought of springing upon their captors, but each, after a moment's reflection, realized the futility of such an action. It would merely delay the firing of the first torpedo.

And so they stood while the seconds passed, the heart of each in his throat. Suddenly the first sign on the board disappeared. A moment later and a second command appeared. Frank and Jack read it simultaneously, and both started forward with a cry.

The word that now stared them in the face, in red, glowing letters, was:

"Fire!"

With a single jerk, the officer released the first torpedo, even as both lads, unable to endure the suspense and inaction any longer, leaped upon him. There was a short, metallic click, the noise of water rushing into the empty tube, and it was over. The first torpedo had sped on its errand of destruction and death.

The German officer turned just in time to grapple with Jack, who was now upon him.

"Seize them, men!" he cried, and struck out sharply at the lad. But Jack was too quick for him, and his right fist went crashing into the German's face. Frank was with him now, and the two turned to face the onrushing sailors.

Both struck out rapidly, but in spite of their resistance, they were soon overpowered by the numerical superiority of their foes, and thrown to the floor. There, realizing the uselessness of further struggling, they gave up and lay still.

The German officer, having struggled to his feet in the meantime, now approached and stood over them. Perceiving they were no longer offering resistance, he motioned the sailors to let them up.

The lads arose and faced the officer.

"I realize your position better than you are probably aware," he said, speaking coldly, "and for that reason I shall overlook your attack upon me. I would have done as you did. I could not stand by and see a German ship sent to the bottom without raising a hand to prevent it. Go to your cabin, sirs."

The boys bowed, and obeyed.

But while the boys were scuffling with the German officer and some of the sailors, others had pushed a second torpedo into the tube. And a sailor

shouted, making himself heard by dint of a very powerful voice:

"Did we hit her?"

Instinctively all kept count—one hundred meters, two hundred meters, three hundred, four hundred. Under the water no sound penetrated. Waiting was all that could be done. For a few moments nothing happened.

Then, suddenly, every man on the boat, Jack and Frank in the cabin, the captain, officers and all, were almost thrown from their feet by a terrific jerk of the submarine. Another jerk, and still another.

Then the submarine rolled as before—evenly. A moment and the regular purring of the engines was heard again. The submarine moved rapidly eastward. She was on her way back home.

And an English battleship was at the bottom of the sea!

CHAPTER VII.

THE AVENGERS.

FRANK picked himself up from the chair into which he had fallen because of the sudden lurching of the vessel.

"What was that?" he asked in alarm. "Have we been hit?"

"I fear there is no such luck," replied Jack. "That, I am sure, is the answer to the German torpedo."

"What do you mean?"

"The lurching of this vessel was caused by the explosion of the torpedo when it struck the British battleship."

"But wouldn't we have heard the explosion?"

"No; there is no sound under water."

There were tears in Frank's eyes, and he was ashamed of them, as he said:

"Think of all the poor fellows aboard! Do you suppose any of them will be saved?"

"I am afraid not," replied Jack sadly. "And to think that we had to stand by unable even to warn them!"

"It is terrible!" said Frank, sinking into a chair.

For many minutes the lads were silent, each offering up a silent prayer for the brave men who had gone to death for their country.

The silence was at length broken by the entrance of Lieutenant Stein. He noticed the boys' sadness, and spoke softly to them.

"It is the fortune of war," he said quietly. "Remember, there probably will be many German lives snuffed out just as easily. Come, brace up!"

The lads brushed the tears from their eyes and rose to their feet.

"I shall speak of it no more," said Jack, huskily.

"Nor I," said Frank.

"Good!" said the lieutenant. "Now you had better turn in and get some sleep. You must be tired out."

"Sleep!" ejaculated Jack. "I couldn't sleep now."

"No, I suppose you couldn't," replied the lieutenant thoughtfully. He was silent for some moments. "I'll tell you what I'll do," he said finally, "we have come to the surface again. I'll ask Captain Von Cromp to allow you to go upon the bridge, if you wish. He realizes your feelings as well as I do, in spite of his apparent gruffness. The cool air will do you good."

"If you will be so kind, I am sure we shall appreciate it," said Frank.

The lieutenant left the cabin. Frank, espying something at one end of the room, walked over to

investigate. He came back to Jack, holding something gingerly in his hand.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed.

"What is it?" asked Jack.

Frank held the object up before his friend's eyes.

"Look at it!" he exclaimed. "Do you know what it is?"

Jack took a long look and then stepped suddenly back, exclaiming:

"Put it down, quick! Do you want to blow us all up?"

"What do you suppose it's doing here?" asked Frank, still holding the object out at arm's length.

"How should I know? But I suppose all submarines carry them. I have heard that many have been planted by submarines."

For the object that Frank held in his hand was a small melinite floating mine!

"I suppose this would blow any ship to kingdom come, wouldn't it?" asked the lad.

"I should say it would; so you had better put it down unless you want to send us all there."

Frank leaned close to his chum, and whispered rapidly:

"See if you can't find a gun around before the lieutenant comes back. Quick! A revolver, rifle, or anything!"

"What for?" demanded Jack, in surprise.

"Never mind what for. Look quick, while I hide this thing under my coat."

Without knowing what Frank had on his mind, Jack did as requested. After rummaging through the lieutenant's desk, he at last straightened up with a heavy revolver in his hand.

"Will this do?" he asked.

"All right," replied Frank, "but a rifle would be safer."

"Safer? What do you mean?"

"Sh-h-h!" whispered Frank.

Footsteps were heard on the outside. Jack hastily shoved the revolver into his pocket. Frank by this time had concealed his explosive under his coat. It bulged out a bit, but the lad folded his arms in front of him, and the bulge was not noticeable.

Lieutenant Stein entered the room.

"It's all right," he said. "Captain Von Cromp has given his consent. If you wish, I will conduct you up."

"Thanks," said Jack, and the two lads followed the officer. Captain Von Cromp was on the bridge when the two boys emerged from below, and he walked over to them.

"I regret," he said, "that you should have had to witness what you have; but it is the fortune of war, you know."

"I have heard that before," said Frank dryly.

"Tell me, would you have blamed us had we put up a more stubborn fight below a while ago?"

"No," was the reply. "I could blame you for nothing you did to an enemy in time of war and especially under such a stress of excitement."

Lieutenant Stein bade the boys good-night and went below. After some further talk, Captain Von Cromp followed him, and the boys were left alone on the submarine, save for the single man on lookout.

Frank walked up to the latter and engaged him in conversation. A few moments later he turned away, saying to the sailor that he and his friend "would take a turn or two about before going below."

Walking swiftly up to Jack, Frank said in a low voice:

"See if you can't find that small boat they used to pick us up."

"What——" began Jack, but Frank interrupted him.

"Never mind the reason," he said. "Help me find it, that's all. We'll have to hurry. Where do you suppose they put it?"

A few moments later they came upon the little craft, now above water, placed where the sea could not reach it when the submarine was submerged.

Luckily it was out of view of the German on the

bridge, and the two lads succeeded in unloosening it and getting it overboard without being seen.

Then Frank walked quickly back to the spot where the periscope protruded from below. Opening his coat he took the explosive out and, drawing a handkerchief from his pocket, tied it to the diminutive mine and hung the latter on the tube.

"Now for this German," he said to himself. "It wouldn't do for him to see that before I am ready."

He approached the man once more and asked several questions.

"Well," he said finally, "I guess I shall have to say good-night."

The German's reply was choked in his throat. Frank sprang forward, flung one arm around the man's neck, and with the other clutched him by the throat, to prevent an outcry.

Then he freed one arm and struck out heavily. The German fell without a murmur. Frank ran across the deck to where he had left Jack.

"Into the boat quick!" he exclaimed.

Jack needed no further urging. Frank dropped lightly in after him, and soon they were rowing rapidly away.

"Give me that gun," said Frank after they had pulled some distance from the submarine.

"What are you going to do with it?" asked Jack.

"I'll show you," replied Frank grimly. "Give me the gun!"

Without another word Jack passed the weapon to his friend.

"Now," said Frank, "lower yourself over the side of the boat and when I say dive, dive!"

"See here," said Jack, taking Frank by the arm. "Have you gone crazy? What do you think you are going to do?"

"I don't *think* anything about it," replied Frank, more quietly now. "I *know* what I am going to do."

"Well, what is it then? Out with it."

"Do you see that object hanging to the periscope tube on the submarine?" asked Frank.

"Yes, I see it. Why?"

"Don't you know what it is?"

"No; what is it?"

"Well, that's the little plaything I found in Lieutenant Stein's cabin. I'm going to bore a little hole through it with this gun you were kind enough to get for me."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Jack. "You'll blow up the submarine with all on board!"

"My idea exactly," replied Frank calmly.

"But——" protested Jack.

"The fortune of war, you know," said Frank, with some sarcasm. "You heard Captain Von Cromp say he wouldn't blame us for anything we might do. Besides, they didn't give the poor fel-

lows on that British battleship any warning, did they?"

"No," said Jack, "but——"

"Well, there are no buts here. You climb overboard and get ready to dive. When this bullet goes through that little plaything there will be an explosion that will kick up considerable excitement hereabouts. That's why I asked you if you couldn't get a rifle. We could have gone a little farther away then."

"Now see here," said Jack. "I guess those fellows have it coming to them. They don't deserve any better than they will get. As you say, 'the fortune of war.' I'm not kicking about that. What I want to know is if you can hit that thing."

"Hit it? Of course I can hit it. You dive when I say the word, and when you come up, if you do come up, I'll guarantee you won't see any submarine."

"But how about you?" demanded Jack. "If I dive before you fire, how are you going to get away before the explosion?"

"I don't calculate I'll get away before it, but I'll be in the water the minute I fire. I won't wait to see whether I hit it or not. However, I'll drop the revolver in the boat, so in case I miss the first time, it will be dry enough to use again."

"But——" began Jack.

Frank stood up in the boat and pointed the revolver directly at the submarine.

"No more words," he said quietly. "Are you ready?"

Jack lowered himself over the edge of the boat, still holding to it with his hands.

"Yes, I'm ready," he said, "but——"

"Then dive!" cried Frank and pulled the trigger.

With a single movement he dropped the revolver into the bottom of the boat, and plunged deep into the sea himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

OFF ON A LONG CRUISE.

At the very instant the lad disappeared beneath the water there was a flash of fire above the submarine, followed by a violent explosion—fearful, terrific.

The upper work of X-9 was blown high into the air and came down in splinters, scattered to the four winds of heaven. The deck was rent and opened up with a great, yawning seam, through which the ocean rushed, driving the craft below the waves as though it had been drawn down by some mighty whirlpool. A minute later, where had been one of Germany's most terrible fighters, there was only a seething flood of water covered with floating wreckage.

The force of the explosion sent the water spouting high in the air like giant gushers. The sea boiled and lashed out angrily at what was left of the German craft. Not a living figure was to be seen upon the wreckage.

The deadly melinite had done its work.

Beneath the waters of the North Sea, where Frank and Jack had sought what shelter they could,

the water tossed them about at will, in spite of their frantic efforts to hold themselves steady and remain below the surface.

Frank, not having time to take such a long breath as Jack, because of the suddenness with which he had dived, was the first to come to the surface. He was tossed high on the still angry waves, but by a herculean effort, the lad managed to keep his head above water.

His first thought was of the small boat he had so recently left. Glancing around, he saw it floating, bottom up, about a hundred yards away. He swam rapidly toward it; and as he hurried along, a head suddenly bobbed up directly in front of him.

It was Jack, struggling and gasping. Frank swam rapidly to him, and lent what assistance he could. Soon Jack was swimming easily with his friend toward the little upturned boat.

They laid hold of the little craft, and after a struggle, succeeded in righting it and clambering aboard, where they sat down, wet and weak. Then, for the first time, Jack turned his eyes toward the spot where so short a time ago had been the German submarine. He saw the mass of floating wreckage.

"Gone," he said simply, "and the poor fellows with it." He turned to Frank. "You certainly did a good job. I never knew that you were so handy with a gun."

"I am a pretty fair shot," Frank admitted modestly.

"But if you had missed the first time——" began Jack.

"I couldn't miss," replied Frank quietly. "I knew that before I pulled the trigger. Some way, I felt certain the bullet would go true. Why, I hardly even aimed."

"Well," said Jack, "I'm sure I don't ever want you blazing away at me."

"I guess we might as well get away from this spot," said Frank. "I wonder where we are?"

Jack stood up in the boat and looked long across the sea. Dawn was just breaking, and in the faint morning light he could see a considerable distance.

"No land in sight," he said finally, and sat down again. "At a guess, though, I should say we must still be off the coast of Holland."

"Yes; but how are we going to tell which way the coast of Holland is?"

"I'm sure I don't know. We'll just have to take a chance at it till the sun comes up, and then we can get our bearings. We'll have to be very careful, though, for there are likely to be mines floating about. If we had some oars we could row a bit. It would warm us up."

But no oars were in sight, either near the boat or among the floating wreckage.

"They must be at the bottom of the sea," said

Frank, in some despair. "I should have thought to have made them fast."

"Never mind that," said Jack. "The question now is, What are we going to do?"

"Well, you know as much about it as I do," replied Frank. "What *are* we going to do?"

"It looks to me as though we should have to drift and take a chance of being picked up," returned Jack.

"Or be blown up by a floating mine," said Frank.

"That's a chance we shall have to take," said Jack calmly. "You should have thought of that before you bored a hole through that mine on the submarine."

Frank did not reply. At length he rose to his feet and took off his coat. Then he turned to Jack.

"Give me yours," he said briefly.

Jack obeyed without question.

Tying the two coats securely together, Frank loosened one of the thwarts in the little boat. He pulled some strong string from his pocket and soon had improvised a little sail. Then tying one sleeve to a cleat on one side and another sleeve to a cleat on the other he soon had his sail bellying before the stiff breeze.

"It's pretty low," he said, leaning back and surveying his work, "but it may move us along a little."

"How do we know we are going in the right direction?" asked Jack.

"We don't; but we might as well be moving as to stay here. We'll let her have her head and keep her steady as she goes."

Slowly the little craft, before the freshening wind, began to make headway.

"This does beat lying still," said Jack. "I don't believe I would have thought of rigging up such a sail as that."

"I guess you would if I hadn't," replied Frank. "Now you try and take a little snooze, while I keep a lookout for a vessel of some kind."

"All right; only, you wake me up in a couple of hours and I'll stand watch."

Frank agreed to this, and Jack rolled over in the bottom of the boat, where, in spite of his wet clothing and the chilling wind, he was soon fast asleep. He was completely exhausted, and any kind of a bed would have felt good to him right then.

Frank, holding the rudder of the boat, sat silent, with his eyes scanning the distant horizon for the sign of a ship. But his watch was vain. Not even the smoke of a patrolling vessel did he see in the distance. His two hours of watch up, he shook Jack vigorously.

The latter was up in an instant, and soon Frank was occupying his place in the bottom of the boat.

For an hour Jack scanned the horizon without making out a ship; then, directly ahead, he saw a cloud of smoke.

"Must be a ship!" he muttered to himself, and turned to arouse Frank. Then he drew back, muttering: "No, there is no need to wake him! He's tired out. Besides, the ship may not sight us, in which case he would be bitterly disappointed."

Slowly the cloud of smoke grew larger, until at length Jack was certain that the vessel was bearing down on them. As it drew closer, he saw that the approaching ship was a cruiser; and as it drew still closer, that it was British.

Then he bent over and aroused Frank.

"Look!" he said, pointing across the water, "what do you think of that?"

Frank was wide awake in an instant.

"A British cruiser," he ejaculated, "and coming right toward us. If she keeps on her course we are sure to be seen."

Frank sprang to the little sail and tore it down. Then each lad picked up a coat, and standing at his full height, waved the garment and yelled lustily.

For some moments this was unrewarded. Then the boys saw signs of excitement aboard the cruiser, and a big gun boomed.

"She's seen us!" cried Frank, and dropped into a seat, laughing happily.

Both lads watched silently the oncoming cruiser.

"Can you make her out?" asked Frank at length.

Jack rose and looked sharply across the water.

"Yes," he said finally. "She is the *Cumberland*."

A small boat was lowered from the cruiser and put off toward them. Soon it scraped alongside the boys' craft, and they were taken aboard where they were received with expressions of great surprise, both by the officer in command and by members of the boat's crew.

"How did you get away out here?" asked the surprised boatswain.

Briefly Jack explained.

"By Jove!" exclaimed the officer when the lad had concluded his story. "You certainly have seen excitement. And so you blew up the German submarine?"

"My friend here did," replied Jack, indicating Frank.

"Sure," said the boatswain, "Captain Marcus will be glad to hear the yarn. It's a good one you can spin."

The little boat now drew up against the cruiser, and quickly all clambered aboard.

As Jack came over the rail, a man of great height —fully six feet five inches—greeted him. He was smooth-faced and ruddy, and the fane-anchor on his collar proclaimed him captain.

"Captain Marcus?" queried Jack, as he leaped to the deck.

"At your service," came the reply in a hearty sailor-like voice.

"I am Lieutenant Jack Templeton, scout cruiser *Sylph,* sir," said Jack, "and this," turning to Frank, "is Lieutenant Frank Chadwick of the same vessel."

"What are you doing in a dingy in the middle of the North Sea?" demanded the captain.

Briefly once more Jack explained.

"The *Sylph* sunk!" exclaimed Captain Marcus. "And what of my old friend Lord Hastings?"

"Gone down with his ship, sir," replied Jack, sadly.

"Hastings dead!" cried the commander of the *Cumberland.* "It is impossible!"

"No, sir," said Frank. "It is true."

For a moment the commander bowed his head in reverence. Then he raised his eyes and looked at the boys.

"He was my very good friend," he said simply, and motioned the boys to follow him below.

Inside the cabin of the commander of the *Cumberland,* the captain motioned the lads to seats.

"Now we shall see what is to be done with you," he said. "At present, because of the loss of the *Sylph,* you are, of course, unattached. How would you like to go with me?"

"Where to, sir?" asked Jack.

"I'll explain," replied the captain. "Until yesterday the *Cumberland* was one of the blockading fleet off Heligoland. You can understand, therefore, that I have already heard of you lads. I have been ordered to patrol the west coast of Africa, and, if I mistake not, there will be fighting. I have recently lost two of my midshipmen through illness. You may have their places. What do you say?"

Both lads had taken a great liking to Captain Marcus at first sight, but it was Jack who made answer for both:

"Thank you, sir. We shall be glad to go with you."

CHAPTER IX.

PATROLLING THE SOUTH SEA.

THE boys learned from Captain Marcus that they had reckoned rightly and that at the moment they were off the port of Amsterdam, Holland.

"Our course," the captain explained, "will take us through the English channel into the Atlantic, thence south to the African coast. How far south we shall go, I cannot say at present."

He called a midshipman to show the boys to the cabin which was to be their quarters while on the *Cumberland.* It was very comfortable, but not much like the one they had aboard the *Sylph.* "However," said Jack, "it's plenty good enough for anyone."

For several days the boys were not assigned to duty, Captain Marcus declaring that they needed a chance to rest up after their strenuous experience with the submarine. He introduced them to all the officers, with whom they speedily became favorites. It was very evident to both the boys that their relationship to Lord Hastings was well known to Captain Marcus and they felt that the many little favors shown them was because of this. They fre-

quently talked of their former commander and friend and their hearts were sad at his untimely end.

In spite of their new surroundings, the days that they sailed southward were somewhat monotonous, and the boys were more than pleased when the *Cumberland* put into Lisbon, Portugal, for coal. Here they were given a day ashore and bought a number of things that they greatly needed as all their effects had gone down with the *Sylph*.

Continuing her journey, the *Cumberland* sailed south through and past the Tropic of Cancer, almost to the equator, without a sign of an enemy. It was in fact just a day's sail from the equator before the *Cumberland* sighted another ship.

Quickly the wireless was put to working and it was found that the approaching vessel was the small British cruiser *Dwarf*. The cruisers came to anchor a short distance apart and the commanders of the two ships exchanged visits.

Upon Captain Marcus' return aboard the *Cumberland,* both ships immediately got under way, the *Dwarf* taking the lead.

"Something up!" said Jack to Frank, as they stood leaning over the rail.

"You are right," replied Frank, and I'll bet you a little red apple I can tell you what it is."

"You can?" exclaimed Jack in surprise. "Let's have it then."

"In my spare moments," explained Frank, "I have been making a study of the maps and charts. We are now almost in the Gulf of Guinea. A small, but nevertheless very deep, river called the Cameroon, empties into the gulf. Do you follow me?"

"Yes, but I don't see what you are driving at."

"Well, the Cameroon region is a German possession. Its largest town, several miles up this navigable river, is Duala, strongly fortified. This, if I am not badly mistaken, is our objective point."

"Perhaps you are right," said Jack somewhat dubiously, "but won't the forts be too strong for the cruisers?"

"Not these, I am sure."

"Well," said Jack, "I hope we see some action soon, whether it is at Duala, as you call it, or some other place. This is growing monotonous."

Frank's prophecy proved correct. Even now the *Cumberland* and the *Dwarf* were well into the Gulf of Guinea and making all headway toward the mouth of the river Cameroon, which point the vessels reached early the following morning, intending to anchor in the mouth of the stream.

At the approach of the cruisers, however, a fort guarding the harbor broke into action.

A few well-directed shots from the big guns of the *Cumberland,* and the fort was silenced. Then, instead of coming to anchor, the cruisers steamed slowly up the river.

Rounding a bend in the stream, Duala could be seen in the distance; likewise the forts guarding the town, and a bombardment of the fortifications was at once begun.

The shore batteries promptly returned the fire, but it soon became apparent that the guns on the ships outranged them.

For several hours the bombardment continued, and then two merchant steamers were seen making their way from the shelter of the port directly toward the British ships.

"Wonder what's up now?" said Frank, who at that moment, having been relieved from duty, stood beside Jack at the rail.

"Don't know," was the latter's brief reply. Nor did anyone else, so those on board the cruisers watched the movements of the oncoming steamers with much curiosity.

When the approaching vessels were little more than a mile up the river they came to a stop. Small boats were lowered over the sides and put off hurriedly in the direction from which they had come. Shortly after, a blinding glare rose to the sky, there was the sound of two terrific reports, one immediately following the other, and the two steamers slowly settled into the water.

Captain Marcus, on the bridge of the *Cumberland,* cried out:

"They have blockaded the river!"

It was true. The ruse was plainly apparent now that it was too late to prevent it. The two sunken vessels made further progress up the river by the British ships impossible.

"Wonder what we shall do now?" asked Frank.

"Haven't any idea," said Jack briefly.

Night drew on and still the British guns continued to hurl their shells upon the German town.

With the fall of darkness there came an answer to Frank's question.

Captain Marcus summoned Frank and Jack.

"The Germans have effectually blocked the river," he told them. "Therefore we cannot capture the town that way. Because of your experience, I have called you two lads to undertake a most dangerous mission.

"You," pointing to Jack, "will lead 400 sailors around through the woods and attack the enemy from the flank. You, Mr. Chadwick," turning to Frank, "I shall put in command of a fleet of four small boats, armed with rapid-firers, and it will be your duty to try and crawl up the river without attracting the attention of the forts. Attacking from two sides, simultaneously, we should take the town.

"In the meantime we shall continue to shell the town, stopping our bombardment at such a time as I believe you will be prepared for a sudden attack. Therefore, when you reach your positions, you will

not attack until the bombardment ceases. That shall be your signal. Do I make myself clear?"

"Perfectly," both lads agreed.

"Good, then. Everything shall be in readiness for you in an hour."

The lads saluted and left the commander's cabin.

Two hours later found Jack, with 400 British sailors at his command, already disembarked from small boats and stealing into the woods. Frank, with his little fleet, was picking his way carefully up the river.

The lad easily found a channel between the two sunken merchantmen, and the little boats pushed on.

"Careful of mines!" had been Captain Marcus' parting injunction and the lad peered keenly ahead constantly.

He made out several small objects floating upon the water, and these were carefully avoided.

By dint of careful rowing the boats finally drew up safely, not more than a quarter of a mile from the German forts, where the little party awaited the signal agreed upon.

Jack, in the meantime, had led his men through the dense woods, and by making a wide detour, had penetrated almost to the rear of the enemy's fortress, which, he figured, would be the most likely to be improperly guarded.

Here he and his men lay down, awaiting the

signal to attack. But still the British bombardment continued, and shells rained upon the little African town.

Suddenly the sound of screeching shells ceased. Jack sprang to his feet and listened intently for a moment. But the big guns on the warships were now silent. It was time to act.

"Attention!" called Jack, and his men stood ready about him.

Silently they crept forward to the very edge of the little town. Here, moving figures in the glare of many fires gave evidence that the German troops and their native allies were on the alert. But as Jack had surmised, they were not expecting an attack from this direction.

Approaching closer and closer, Jack finally gave the command:

"Fire!"

The crack of 400 rifles followed this command, and under the withering fire of the British, the Germans were mowed down on all sides.

At the same instant, from the river, the rapid-firers in Frank's command shattered the stillness of the night with their noise of death. Thus attacked on two sides, the Germans for a moment stood as if paralyzed, men dropping on all sides.

But for a moment only. Then they leaped forward ready to encounter the unseen foe. Under the command of their officers they formed coolly

enough, and volley after volley was fired into the woods.

But Jack and his 400 British sailors were not to be stayed. Right in among the Germans they plunged, shooting, cutting and slashing. The Germans at this end of the town were gradually being forced back, back upon their comrades who already were retreating before the rapid-firers of Frank's command at the other end of the town.

Caught between two fires, they nevertheless fought bravely, pouring in volley for volley. Suddenly the British under Jack ceased firing altogether and rushed upon the foe with cutlasses and clubbed rifles.

The shock of this attack was too much for the Germans, and with the fierce hail of bullets from Frank's end of the field, there was but one thing for them to do.

The officer in command raised a handkerchief on the point of his sword. Jack could barely make it out in the half-light. At the same moment the officer commanding the Germans opposing Frank's small force cried out:

"We surrender!"

Instantly the sound of firing ceased, and the German officer walked up to Frank and delivered his sword. At precisely the same moment, the other German officer, who it turned out was in command of the town, presented his sword to Jack.

Jack gallantly passed the weapon back to him, saying:

"Keep it, sir. I could not deprive so brave a man of his sword. However, I must ask you to accompany me back to my ship."

The German signified his assent, and Jack called out to Frank whom he could now see approaching with his prisoner:

"Are you hurt, Frank?"

"No," came the reply, "are you?"

Jack made haste to reply in the negative.

The boys decided that Frank should stay with the sailors left to guard the town, and that Jack should escort the German commander to the *Cumberland.*

Accordingly the two took their seats in one of the little boats, and were rowed back down the stream.

Frank, after giving the necessary orders to guard the town and fort, established himself in the commander's quarters, where he awaited some word from Captain Marcus.

CHAPTER X.

THE BOYS MAKE AN ENEMY.

JACK with his prisoner returned aboard the *Cumberland,* where the lad turned the German commander over to Captain Marcus.

"Shall I go back to the town, sir?" he asked, as the commander signified that he might leave the cabin.

"If you like," was the reply.

"Have you any commands regarding the prisoners, sir? Or as to the manner of guarding the place against attack?"

"Yes; you may present my respects to Mr. Chadwick, and tell him that you two are in joint authority until morning, when I shall do myself the pleasure of paying you a visit. You will take whatever precautions necessary to guard against an attack from any of the enemy who may move against you from Boak."

"Very well, sir," replied Jack, saluting.

"Boak, as you probably are aware," continued the commander, "is another small German fortress further up the river. I do not anticipate an attack, but it is best to be prepared. You may also say to

Mr. Chadwick that I am well pleased with his work, and with yours."

"Thank you, sir," returned the lad, and saluting again, he turned and left the cabin.

He was over the side of the *Cumberland* in a few moments, and was soon being rowed swiftly back toward Duala.

Several hundred yards from the little landing, his ears caught the sound of a great hubbub. There were cries and shouts and general confusion.

Rapidly the lad covered the intervening distance, leaped to the ground and sprinted in the direction in which he could see a knot of wildly gesticulating figures.

"Sounds to me like Frank was in trouble of some kind," he panted to himself as he ran along, for at that moment he had detected the sound of his friend's voice raised in anger.

Jack dashed up to the knot of men, all of whom he now perceived were British sailors, and as he saw his friend standing calmly in the center of them, unhurt, he paused on the edge of the crowd to watch developments.

With a flush on his face, plainly evident in the red glow of a camp fire, Frank stood facing a man. The latter, in height, topped the lad by a good three inches, and even from where he stood Jack could see that the man's fingers twitched nervously at his side.

"I am in command here until further notice," Frank was saying, "and while I am, our captives will receive such treatment as is due prisoners of war. Do you understand that, Mr. Stanley?"

"Bah!" cried the other, whom Jack now recognized as an officer aboard the *Cumberland;* "by seniority I am your superior officer. I am not answerable to you for my actions."

"Aren't you?" exclaimed Frank, taking a threatening step forward, a peculiar glint in his eyes. "We'll see about that later. In the meantime understand that I am in command here and that what I say goes. Molest another of the prisoners and you shall answer to me."

"Is that so?" sneered Stanley. "And what do you think you'll do about it?"

"Try and see," said Frank grimly.

"Do you think I'm afraid of you?" cried Stanley. "I'll show you!"

With these words, he took a sudden step backward, and Jack was able to see the cause of all the trouble. Crouching between two sailors was an old native, black of color and grizzled of hair. Stanley doubled his fist, and before a hand could be raised to stop him, drove it between the old native's eyes.

Jack sprang forward with a cry, but Frank forestalled him. He leaped upon the perpetrator of this inhuman act, and with a quick blow knocked him to the ground.

Stanley rose with blood on his lips and evil in his eye. Quickly he stepped back a pace, and a revolver glinted in his hand.

"You—you——" he stuttered.

At that moment the revolver was twisted violently from his grasp, and, turning, Stanley looked into Jack's angry countenance.

"What's the meaning of this?" Jack demanded. "Would you become a murderer?"

"He struck me," shouted Stanley angrily, "and he shall give me satisfaction, and so shall you, you meddling upstart."

"So?" said Jack quietly. "What kind of satisfaction do you want? I'm perfectly ready to accommodate you."

Stanley took one look at Jack's stalwart figure, fully his own height and equally as broad. Evidently he decided he cared nothing for a tussle with this opponent.

"I have nothing to say to you," he said. "But this fellow," pointing to Frank, "struck me and I demand satisfaction."

"Well," said Frank, interrupting. "You shall have it. Pull off your coat."

"I'm not a common bruiser," sneered Stanley. "I will fight you with revolvers at twenty paces."

"Enough of this," broke in Jack. "I will permit no duel."

"I do not want to kill you," said Frank.

"So!" exclaimed the enraged officer, "a coward, eh?"

Frank stepped quickly forward, an angry gleam in his eye.

"Enough," he said. "I'll fight you."

Again Jack started to protest, but Frank waved him aside and turned to the men gathered about.

"Can I depend upon you men not to let this go any further?" he asked.

"You can, sir," they answered in chorus.

"All right, then," said Frank. "Get ready, sir."

One sailor volunteered to act as second for Stanley and Jack stepped to Frank's side. Then the two seconds met and decided the details of the duel. The principals were to be allowed one shot each. This was to be all, whether either man was hit or not.

Before accepting the revolver from the hand of his second, Stanley quickly drew his own revolver, and taking aim at a little knob on a tree some fifty feet distant, fired quickly. The bullet splintered the bark on the tree and the pieces flew high in the air.

"Half an inch away!" called a sailor who stood near the tree.

Stanley turned to Frank with a sneering smile on his face.

"Say your prayers," he taunted. "They will be your last."

Frank smiled grimly.

"I heard a story once," he replied quietly, "about a man who could hit a dime every shot at a hundred yards. But when he fired with a loaded pistol pointed at him he didn't come off with such a good record."

The principals now stood back to back. Each was to take twenty paces forward—Jack had refused to make the distance any closer—turn and fire when ready.

"Ready, go!" came Jack's voice, and slowly the two started away from each other.

"Seventeen, eighteen, nineteen——" counted Frank, and at that instant there was a sound of a shot and a bullet whistled over his head, grazing the scalp.

Stanley, nervous because of the lad's coolness, had fired at the count of nineteen.

"Twenty!" said Frank without a sign of nervousness in his voice. He turned slowly, and aimed his revolver at the ground in front of him.

Very slowly he raised the barrel of his weapon until it pointed at the knees of his now shaking antagonist, then to his belt, to his chest, and finally to his head.

Beads of perspiration stood out on Stanley's forehead. Then, with a quick movement, Frank raised the muzzle of his weapon still higher, and fired over Stanley's head!

Then he calmly replaced the weapon in his pocket and walked back to where Jack was standing.

Having thus escaped what appeared almost certain death, Stanley became bold again. Evidently he had not realized that Frank had missed purposely.

"I demand another shot," he cried angrily.

"There will be no more duel so far as I am concerned," said Frank quietly.

Jack walked angrily up to Stanley.

"He spared your life," he said heatedly.

"Bah!" replied Stanley. "He missed cleanly, and he's afraid to try again."

Frank walked quickly over to his late opponent.

"You fool!" he said quietly. "Look here!"

Quickly he whipped his revolver out, and without taking aim, fired twice in rapid succession.

Although three times as far away as Stanley had been when he gave his exhibition of skill, the little knot on the tree leaped into the air, and as it fell, the second bullet caught it in midair and splintered it into little pieces.

Midshipman Stanley staggered back aghast.

"I could have killed you with ease," said Frank calmly, and walking away, he picked up his coat and put it on.

"I—I—I didn't know he could shoot like that!" sputtered Stanley to Jack.

"That's not so very good—for him," said Jack. "Why, once——"

"Never mind," interrupted Midshipman Stanley, backing hurriedly away, "I'll take your word for it. But, remember, I am not through with either of you yet. My time will come, and when it does——"

He broke off abruptly, an evil sneer in his voice, and walked quickly away.

Now the sailors surrounded Frank and gave him three rousing British cheers.

"You're all right, Frank!" they called, some of them slapping him familiarly on the back.

Frank waved them laughingly aside, and turned to Jack.

"Any orders from Captain Marcus?" he asked, as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened.

"Lead the way to your excellency's quarters, and I'll tell you," replied Jack with a smile.

Frank led the way.

CHAPTER XI.

AN EXPEDITION.

Briefly Jack repeated Captain Marcus' orders to Frank.

"I took the liberty of making those preparations without awaiting such a command," said Frank. "I have thrown out outposts, and there is no danger of a surprise to-night."

"You mean this morning," disagreed Jack, after a look at his watch. "It's after four o'clock now."

"Then it will soon be daylight," said Frank. "You had better turn in and get a little sleep. I'll stand watch."

Jack well knew the futility of an argument over this matter, so he turned in without further words by the simple process of throwing himself on a pallet on the floor of the tent. Frank took his seat in the doorway, where he remained looking out into the distance.

The sun was high in the heavens when Jack awoke. He jumped up with a start. Frank was not there. Jack made a hasty toilet and set out to find his friend. He came upon him at the river landing, and, as the lad cast his eyes down the stream,

he made out the launch of Captain Marcus coming swiftly toward the camp.

He tapped Frank lightly on the shoulder.

"Why didn't you wake me up?" he demanded.

"Well, you were sleeping so comfortably I hated to disturb you," replied Frank.

"And I suppose you would have let Captain Marcus find me asleep?"

"I don't believe he would have minded. He knows we all sleep some time."

"I'll get even with you one of these days," said Jack laughing, and both lads stepped to the very edge of the landing to give Captain Marcus a hand as he clambered from the boat.

"How is everything?" he demanded, as he arose to his feet.

"First rate," replied Frank.

"No signs of the enemy?"

"Not a sign, sir."

"Good! Evidently he doesn't know we have occupied the town. I believe that by a quick dash we can capture Boak. What do you think?"

"Fine!" exclaimed Jack with enthusiasm.

"Of course we can, sir," agreed Frank.

"All right, then; it shall be your job!"

Jack and Frank saluted.

"Thank you, sir," both said breathlessly.

Several hours later the two lads, in the captain's launch, found themselves at the head of a small flo-

tilla moving slowly up the river. Each boat was equipped with one rapid-fire gun and carried twenty men. In all there were twelve boats.

The farther up the river the little party progressed the narrower became the stream, until finally it was little better than a deep creek. Foliage of large trees overhung the water, making it almost as dark as night. The water was black and murky.

Frank shuddered as he glanced at it.

"Looks like it might be full of all kinds of reptiles and things," he said.

"It certainly does," Jack agreed. "I would as soon think of jumping into the bottomless pit as of diving into this black stream."

Around bend after bend in the small stream the little flotilla proceeded cautiously, and ever, as they progressed, the stream became narrower and more fear-inspiring.

In some of the boats men began to grumble. Jack turned and called out angrily:

"Silence! Then he added more companionably: "It's all right, men. Where men have gone before men can go now without fear of the unknown. I'll admit it doesn't look very pleasant, but surely an English sailor is not afraid to go where a German foot has trod."

The men started a cheer at the lad's words, but he silenced them by a motion of his hand, and called out:

"Silence! We do not want to warn the enemy of our approach."

Now, rounding a little bend in the stream, the lads could make out, some distance ahead, what appeared to be the huts of a little village. Also, they could see that, at that point, the stream widened out considerably.

Apparently secure in the belief that the forts at Duala could successfully ward off the attacks of any enemy, the German commander at Boak had grown careless, and the lads could not see a single sign of soldiers or sentries.

Frank glanced behind him and ordered softly:

"Take down all flags!"

The command was passed from one boat to another, and soon the little flotilla was moving up the river, looking more like a pleasure party than a hostile force, except for the uniforms of the men. However, these could not be plainly seen from the village, because of the shadow cast by the dense foliage that overhung the river.

Now, through their glasses, the boys could see several German officers peering at them through long telescopes.

"They've seen us," said Jack.

"Yes," was Frank's reply. "But evidently they believe us friends, or they would open fire on us."

"Perhaps their guns are not of the heavy caliber of those at Duala."

"By Jove! I believe you have hit it!" exclaimed Frank. "In that case, with our rapid-firers, we should have little trouble taking the village."

At the point where the stream widened out, Jack allowed two of the craft behind to come up even, and thus, three abreast, the journey was continued.

Every man was now at his post. The gunners were ready to open with the rapid-firers at a moment's notice. All held their rifles ready. Still the Germans did not fire, apparently uncertain of the identity of the newcomers—or rather, seemingly certain they were friends.

Suddenly a squad of six German soldiers wheeled a small, old-fashioned cannon to the landing near the officers, and a moment later a solid shot plowed up the water in front of the first boat of the British flotilla.

"A signal to show our colors," said Jack grimly. "What do you say, Frank? Are we ready to show them?"

"Yes!" cried Frank.

An instant and the English Jack floated over each boat, while at the same time the first three boats in the battle line opened with their rapid-firers.

At the distance, scarcely two hundred yards, the execution was terrible. The German officers and the entire gun squad, riddled with bullets, fell forward on their faces.

But this was only the beginning.

Swiftly moving German troops now came marching to the river front, steadily, in spite of the withering British fire, and sternly, to repel the foe. Slowly they came into position, and, dropping on their knees, poured a volley into the little flotilla.

But, deadly as this fire was, that of the rapid-firers aboard the boats was more so. The British did not escape without considerable damage, but the German loss was far heavier.

Steadily, in spite of the grilling German fire, the boats pressed on.

Each man concealed himself as well as he could behind the low sides of the boats, exposing just enough of his head to take aim at the enemy.

The first boats were now but a scant hundred yards away. For some reason, evidently thinking to pick off the men in the boats, the enemy had not brought artillery to bear. But at this juncture a squad sprang forward to serve the gun already used.

A charge was rammed home and the gun sighted; but, as the man detailed was about to pull the lanyard, Frank sprang suddenly to his feet in the boat and his revolver spoke. The German flung wide his arms and toppled to the ground. Another sprang to his place, but only to meet the same fate; and another, and still another.

All this time the little rapid-firers were continuing their deadly work, and at last a bugle sounded

the call for the German retreat. Slowly they drew off, firing as they went, but, as the British now moved up faster, the Teutons turned and ran.

Quickly the little flotilla came alongside the wharf and men scrambled ashore. It was but the work of a few minutes to land the rapid-firers, half the British with rifles meanwhile holding off the enemy.

Then, everything in readiness, Frank gave the order for an advance.

Now, from all sides, came a withering German fire. The enemy had taken to the woods, seeking to pick off the English one at a time; but, at a word from Jack, the machine-guns were turned upon the trees, and this scattering fire soon turned the retreat into a rout.

As the English at length poured into the streets of the little village itself, from every house and hut came a German bullet. Many British fell, and it was here that the heaviest losses were sustained by the attacking party.

But Frank soon found a remedy for this. The rapid-fire guns were turned upon the huts and houses, and, as the bullets began to find their way into the openings, the work of the snipers stopped.

For some minutes there was a lull in the fighting, while ammunition for the guns was brought up from the boats; when, suddenly, down the street came a band of Germans at a charge.

Quickly the British formed to meet them, the rapid-fire guns for the moment being useless. Swords and bayonets were bared and rifles were clubbed. The Germans came on with a rush. The impact was terrific, but the British sailors stood firm, and gave thrust for thrust, blow for blow—and more.

Being unable to force the British back, and, seeing that they were getting the worst of this hand-to-hand encounter, the German officers ordered a retreat. This proved their complete undoing, for, as they drew off at a run, the rapid-firers of the British again came into action, and the enemy were mowed down like chaff.

More rapidly now the British pushed on through the heart of the village, Frank telling off a few men here and there to give notice of a possible approach of reënforcements from some other direction.

But no reënforcements came, and the Germans finally retreated before the victorious British until they were once again sheltered by a dense forest. Then Frank called a halt.

He threw a cordon around the town and dispatched three men in a little boat to inform Captain Marcus of the success of his expedition.

"Well," said Jack, with a laugh, "we've got the town all right. What are we going to do with it?"

"That's the question," replied Frank. "I guess,

before making any further move, we had better wait for orders."

"My idea, exactly," said Jack.

"Since we're agreed," replied Frank, "we'll wait."

CHAPTER XII.

FINISHING UP THE WORK.

It was not until somewhat late the following morning that Captain Marcus, accompanied by the commander of the British cruiser *Dwarf,* reached Boak. Frank and Jack were at the little wharf to greet him.

After expressing a few words of commendation for the manner in which they had handled their men in the capture of the town, the two British commanders took a turn about the village.

"It will be impossible for us to remain here for the sole purpose of guarding these towns," said Captain Marcus. "We have other work to do. So now the question arises as to what to do with them."

"I would suggest," said the commander of the *Dwarf,* "that we put a prize crew aboard the German merchantman still in Duala, iron our prisoners, put them aboard her and send her home. We can make a thorough search of the town and destroy all arms and ammunition to be found."

"But," said Captain Marcus, "we shall first have to dispose of those Germans who escaped to the forest."

"That shouldn't be a hard job," replied the commander of the *Dwarf*, "I do not imagine there are many of them."

"About how many would you say?" asked Captain Marcus, turning to Frank, who, with Jack, had accompanied the two officers on the tour of inspection.

"Not more than a hundred, sir," was the lad's reply.

"Good!" replied Captain Marcus. "Do you feel equal to the task of rounding them up?"

"Perfectly, sir," Frank made answer.

"So be it, then. You may act at your own discretion; only see that you make a good, swift job of it."

Frank and Jack saluted and hurried away. Leaving half their force to guard the village, the lads, with the other half, which had dwindled to less than 100 by now, were soon lost to sight in the forest. They went quickly, but as silently as they could, for they wished, if possible, to take the foe by surprise.

"This is likely to be a wild goose chase," declared Jack, when, at the end of an hour of forced marching they had seen no sign of the enemy. "There is no telling where the Germans are. They know the lay of the land and we don't. If they continue to retreat, there is no telling where we may come up with them, if at all."

Frank's lips set grimly.

"We'll get 'em," he said, "if we have to follow 'em clear across Africa."

They continued their march in silence. At length Frank drew his friends' attention to the fact that, a little to the left, the grass had been recently trampled, apparently by a considerable body of men.

"They can't be far ahead of us," he said. "Evidently they are not aware they are being pursued, for they apparently have been traveling slowly."

The British became more wary. Frank divided his men into two bodies, one of which he placed under Jack's command, while he himself led the other.

For another hour or more they continued, still without sign of an enemy.

The two British forces were now separated by at least a quarter of a mile, when Jack unexpectedly came to the edge of the forest. There, just ahead of him, lay the entire German command in a little opening surrounded on all sides by large trees.

Jack raised his hand and his men came to a halt. Frank, at the head of his command, perceived this movement, and also halted his men. Then he covered the distance to where his friend stood peering through the trees as quickly as possible.

Without a word Jack pointed out the Germans. Frank took a quick look, and together the two boys drew back into the shelter of the trees. They had not been seen.

"I believe I have a plan that will deliver the whole bunch into our hands, possibly without bloodshed," said Jack.

"What is it?" demanded Frank.

"Well," said Jack, "you will notice that the opening in which the Germans lie is entirely surrounded by trees. My idea is to completely surround them, and, at a given signal, fire a volley over their heads. Believing that our force is much greater than it is, and apparently cut off from escape in all directions, the Germans may surrender."

"A good idea," exclaimed Frank. "We will act upon it at once."

Quickly he scattered his men in a wide circle around the German camp. Then, when he felt that all was in readiness, he gave the signal—a shot from his revolver.

Immediately there was a fierce volley from the British, aimed high. The German troops sprang to their feet in a moment; then, at a command from their officer, dropped quickly to the ground again.

Whatever idea Frank had had of a bloodless victory was quickly dispelled, for the German troops, lying flat on their stomachs, fired volley after volley into the woods at their unseen opponents.

This was ineffective, however, because the British were well protected by the great trees. At a command from Frank, which was passed rapidly along

the British line, the sailors trained their rifles upon the enemy and fired.

The effect was fearful. Germans toppled over on all sides, and some jumped to their feet and ran toward the trees. Bullets greeted them from all sides, however, and, after making one last stand, the entire German force threw their weapons to the ground as one man.

"We surrender!" called the officer in command.

Slowly the circle of British emerged from the forest and closed in on them. The German officer delivered his sword to Frank without a word; then, at the lad's command, the British surrounded the prisoners and started on their return journey to Boak, where they arrived after a three hours' forced march, and were greeted with acclaim by the sailors who had been left behind. Not a single sailor had been killed in the short but decisive battle, though two had been wounded.

Captain Marcus, and the commander of the *Dwarf* also, complimented the lads highly upon the quick success of their expedition. The village had been thoroughly searched for arms and ammunition during their absence, and all was now ready for a quick departure.

"Get the prisoners into the boats, and we will start down the river at once," ordered Captain Marcus.

This was soon accomplished, and the little flotilla was on its way back toward Duala. At Duala a

second search was made for arms, ammunition and other munitions of war. This done, the commander of the *Cumberland* turned to Frank.

"You will go aboard that German merchantman in the harbor," he said, "and take her to London. You are in command, and Mr. Templeton shall be your first officer. The others you may select yourself. A prize crew will be put aboard immediately."

Frank was somewhat taken aback at this good fortune.

"But I am not a navigator," he said in some confusion, wishing now that he was.

"That makes it different," was Captain Marcus' reply. "I——"

"But I am, sir," Jack interrupted. "I have studied navigation for years."

"Good then!" said Captain Marcus. "In that event, I shall appoint you to take command and your friend as first officer."

"But——" Jack started to protest, when Frank interrupted him.

"I shall be glad to serve under him," he said.

So it was arranged, and several hours later the two lads found themselves aboard the German steamer *Lena*. For the first time in his life Jack trod the bridge of his own ship, and he could not but be proud of that moment; Frank, too, was elated at his good fortune.

With this parting injunction, Captain Marcus dropped over the side of the *Lena:*

"Make straight for London. Although you carry some guns, if attacked do not fight back unless absolutely necessary. Show the enemy your heels, if possible. However, if you do have to fight, fight as the true sons of Great Britain."

"We shall, sir," replied both lads grimly, and Captain Marcus realized that he could not have put the ship in better hands.

From among the crew Jack now selected a sailor named Jennings for second officer, and another by the name of Johnson for third officer. There was a hissing of steam from below, slowly the cable was loosened, and the *Lena* put off down the river.

The two British commanders followed in small boats. At the entrance of the river the steamer slowed down, and the boys watched the two commanders go aboard their respective cruisers.

A moment later guns on both ships boomed loudly. It was a salute, carrying a cheery "Good luck" to the ears of the two lads. As they sailed out to sea they could perceive that the cruisers also were getting under way, and were heading in the same direction as the *Lena.*

The *Lena* quickened her pace and sped off toward the north, heading for the open water. Night fell and still she steamed rapidly on, the cruisers following in her wake.

Frank took the first watch, and Jack turned in. The sea was perfectly smooth and the *Lena* steamed on, rolling gently on the even swell of the waves.

At 7 o'clock, the sun streaming high in the heavens, Jack appeared on deck. A moment later Frank, who had been relieved by the second officer during the night, also emerged from his cabin.

Both turned their eyes over the stern, where the night before the two British cruisers had been following, offering protection in whatever danger threatened.

The cruisers were not in sight. There was not even a cloud of smoke to show their presence anywhere on the wide sea. They had turned off on another course during the darkness.

"Well," said Jack, "it's up to us to get into port safely. We have been thrown upon our own resources."

"Yes," Frank agreed. "Captain Marcus has put great confidence in us. It's up to us to make good."

"Well," declared Jack slowly, "we'll do it."

"Yes," said Frank, "we will!"

CHAPTER XIII.

QUELLING AN OUTBREAK.

Among the prisoners who were being sent home to England on the *Lena* was the German commander who had been captured at Duala, Colonel Von Roth. He had given his parole, and accordingly had not been put in irons with the other prisoners in the hold, but had been given a cabin to himself near the one which Frank and Jack shared jointly.

Besides Jack and Frank and the two other officers, the crew of the *Lena* was made up of fifty sailors, a chief engineer and his assistant and a squad of stokers. In all, there were probably seventy-five British aboard.

All the prisoners captured had not been put aboard the *Lena* for the reason that there were too many of them. Some were aboard the *Cumberland,* and the *Dwarf* was caring for the remainder. However, there were probably a hundred prisoners aboard the *Lena* besides the colonel.

Colonel Von Roth made himself very agreeable, and, in spite of the fact that he was an enemy, the boys took quite a liking to him. He conversed fluently upon subjects pertaining to America, where

he said he had visited more than once, and also spoke familiarly of that spot on the African coast where Jack had made his boyhood home.

Having thus thrown the lads off their guard, Colonel Von Roth set about finding a way in which he could recapture the ship. Of his parole he thought nothing.

"What's a parole worth when given to a couple of children?" he had muttered to himself.

From the start the German officer made himself perfectly at home, and, although the boys had thought of remonstrating, he was allowed the freedom of all parts of the ship. He went below, when he felt so disposed, and returned when he was ready.

"It seems to me that our gallant colonel is taking things almost too free and easy," Frank had remarked to Jack, at one of their daily conferences.

"So he is," Jack had made reply, "I'll have to speak to him about it."

He did so, and was somewhat taken aback at the officer's manner of receiving the rebuke.

"I meant no harm," he replied, with an air of offended dignity, "but, of course, if you do not wish me to go below, I shall not do so."

However, he had quickly seemed to forget this, and neither lad, because of his apparent sensitiveness, had the heart to remind him of it.

It had just struck four bells two days later, and Jack stood on the bridge alone. Frank had gone

into his cabin and lain down. He felt somewhat ill, and decided that a rest was what he needed to put him in condition again.

Jack, having just ordered a slight alteration in his course to the man at the wheel, signaled the engine-room for more speed. There was no response to the signal, and Jack tried it again. Still there was no response.

"That's funny," said the lad to himself, "the bell was working all right a moment ago. Guess I'll go and see what's the matter."

He called the second officer, who took the bridge while Jack went below. As he made his way to the engine-room he was brought to a sudden stop at the door. He heard a familiar voice inside, speaking in a tone of great satisfaction.

"Colonel Von Roth, or I'm much mistaken," Jack told himself, laying a hand on the door. "I wonder——"

Struck with a sudden thought, he drew back suddenly, and then laid his ear to the door.

"You dogs!" came the colonel's voice from within. "Thought to get away with this ship, did you? Well, I'll show you!"

Without a moment's hesitation Jack opened the door and sprang inside. The action almost cost him his life. He had expected to find no enemy but the German officer in the engine-room, but in this he was sadly mistaken. The room was full of men.

The colonel had laid his plans carefully, and they had worked out to his satisfaction.

In a moment when the attention of the sentry guarding the captives had been attracted elsewhere, Von Roth sneaked up on him from behind and struck him a heavy blow with his fist. Then, tying the prostrate man, the colonel had possessed himself of the guard's key and removed the irons from some of the German prisoners.

He did not wait to release all of them, for he was too anxious to try his plan of retaking the ship. Therefore, when he had freed twenty-five men, he led them quickly to the engine-room, thinking first to capture their strategic point and to take care of the rest of the ship's crew later.

He had burst into the engine-room so suddenly, with his men at his heels, that the engineer and his assistants had been too surprised to resist, in spite of the fact that not one of the prisoners, save the colonel himself, was armed—the colonel having appropriated one of Frank's revolvers.

When Jack sprang into the room it was with his revolver held ready for instant use. In a trice he took in the situation, and realized that it was no time for talk. The stokers, the engineer and his assistant were standing helpless, evidently awed by the larger number of Germans.

Jack's revolver spoke, and Colonel Von Roth's

hat leaped from his head. In his hurry Jack's aim had been poor.

The German officer whirled and his revolver also rang out. Jack felt a sting in his left arm, but he did not pause.

Right into the middle of the crowd of Germans he sprang, his revolver spitting fire as he leaped. Down went three Germans, and then Jack was in among them. The tenth and last shot of his automatic went squarely into the face of a German soldier.

Battling desperately the Germans leaped upon him and overwhelmed him. So closely entwined were the struggling men that Jack was unable to take the time to draw his second revolver; but he was not daunted. His fighting blood was up, and he hurled his six feet of height and 178 pounds of weight into the thick of the conflict.

His revolver reversed in his hand, he struck out often and fiercely. Here and there the sound of a crunch told him a blow had landed. But he had no time to investigate; the press was too thick.

By this time the engineer, his assistant and the stokers had recovered from their surprise and rushed to Jack's aid. Friend and foe alike grabbed up whatever weapon they could lay their hands on—wrenches, hand-bars and heavy iron pokers.

Guarding his head as well as he could with one upraised arm, Jack struck right and left with his

revolver butt. A man sprang at him with a heavy wrench, but the lad caught it, by a quick move, on his revolver. It saved his head, but the weapon went to the floor in a thousand pieces.

Jack grappled with this antagonist, and, by a quick twist of the arm, whipped the wrench from his opponent's hand. It rose and fell and the German toppled over.

Colonel Von Roth, now the only man in the room armed, stood off to one side, trying in vain to bring his revolver to bear upon Jack. He was afraid to fire, however, for fear of hitting one of his own men. Hither and thither he darted around the struggling mass of men, attempting to get a clear shot at the lad.

Suddenly Jack stooped near the door of one of the furnaces and picked up a heavy iron poker. With this he laid about him right lustily, and in a moment had cleared a little circle about himself. The rest of the English, driven back by the Germans, were still fighting desperately at the opposite side of the room.

Now that Jack was standing alone, he made an excellent target for Colonel Von Roth's revolver, and the colonel was not slow to realize it.

Quickly he raised the revolver and fired; but at that same moment Jack suddenly took two rapid steps forward, and the bullet whistled harmlessly over his head.

The lad raised his eyes from the rest of his opponents for a brief instant, and in that instant realized that the colonel had singled him out for his bullet.

With a sudden fierce bellow he raised his heavy poker in both hands, and plunged into the thick of the conflict. There was no stopping him now. His rush was irresistible. He bore down upon the foe like a human catapult.

Heavy wrenches, pieces of steel, nuts and bolts were hurled at him. Some struck him and some flew past. But to these he paid no heed. Strong as a lion he fought his way on. The Germans retreated before this fighting figure of sinew and muscle; they quailed before his grim set mouth and the gleam in the eye of him.

With mighty strokes he swept them aside with broken heads and arms and limbs. His object now was Colonel Von Roth, who still stood at the far end of the room, his revolver raised, ready to fire.

Taking heart from the gallant action of their commander, the British stokers sprang forward anew, and now the Germans tried to escape. The English pushed them back rapidly.

Straight for Colonel Von Roth went Jack. The colonel, with upraised revolver, saw him coming and turned pale. He aimed quickly and fired. Jack staggered back a step and then came on again. A

second time the colonel fired, but this time the lad did not even pause.

The heavy iron poker seemed to whirl about his head; there was the sound of a blow. Colonel Von Roth went to the floor with a groan, and Jack fell sprawling on top of him, unconscious.

Even as the lad fell, the one German soldier who still remained in the room, picked up a heavy wrench and sprang forward. Quickly he raised his arm, and was in the very act of hurling it at the head of the unconscious lad when there was the sound of a revolver shot. The German threw up both arms, spun rapidly around once or twice, and fell to the floor.

In the doorway stood Frank. Aroused from his slumber by the sounds of scuffling below, he had sprung up suddenly. At first he could not make out the cause of the disturbance. Then there suddenly flashed before his face a vision of Colonel Von Roth.

This vision spurred him to instant action. Leaping from his bunk he ran on deck. There all was serene and quiet. He paused for a moment, undecided. Then, urged on by some uncanny foresight, he dashed toward the engine-room.

On the steps he met the first of the retreating German soldiers. With a cry over his shoulder to the third officer, who had followed him, he plunged

in among them, striking out swiftly right and left. At the door of the engine-room he halted.

At first he could not make out Jack's unconscious figure lying on the floor. But, as the German stooped to pick up the wrench, the lad divined his purpose. He had fired just a moment before the wrench would have crushed out his friend's life.

Quickly Frank bent over his chum and gently raised his head to his knee There was no sign of life in the still body and Frank quickly placed his hand over the lad's heart. A faint fluttering was his reward.

"Thank God! he's alive!" he said.

Exerting himself to the utmost, he lifted Jack to his own shoulders, and started toward the door. At that moment the third officer came rushing down the steps. Together they carried Jack to his cabin, where they laid him on his bunk. Then Frank hastily summoned the surgeon.

The lad bent over his friend anxiously as the physician examined him.

"Will he live, doctor?" he asked anxiously.

The surgeon shook his head doubtfully.

"Bullet just grazed his temple," he said. "Also he is badly bruised about the body. So far as I can see there are no broken bones; but he may be injured internally."

"Is there anything I can do, doctor?"

The surgeon looked at the lad's white face.

"Yes," he replied. "Go and see that the prisoners are safely secured. I can work better without your presence here."

Frank started to protest, but the surgeon raised a warning hand. Without another word Frank left the cabin.

Making sure that all the unwounded prisoners had been safely secured, Frank gave orders that Colonel Von Roth's body be prepared for burial. An hour later he returned to the cabin.

"How is he, doctor?" was his first question.

"Still unconscious, as you may see," was the reply. "However, I have made a thorough examination, and I believe that you need have no fear; but he must have perfect quiet for several days. Some one must be with him constantly. It would be well to have someone come now and wait here until he regains consciousness. I have other work to do."

"I'll sit here myself," said Frank quietly. "As you go out will you tell the second officer to keep the bridge until further notice?"

The surgeon bowed and left the cabin. Drawing up a chair, Frank sat down beside his unconscious friend and took up his silent vigil.

CHAPTER XIV.

PURSUED.

It was hours later that Frank first noticed signs of returning consciousness in his wounded comrade. Jack's pale face took on a little color, his eyelids fluttered, and a minute later he opened his eyes.

Frank bent over him.

"How do you feel, old fellow?" he asked gently.

It was some seconds before Jack replied. His gaze roved about the cabin, and Frank could see that for the moment his friend was unable to recognize his surroundings. At last, however, a look of understanding passed over his face, and he spoke:

"It was a great old scrap, wasn't it?" and he smiled up at his friend.

"It was all of that," replied Frank. "But tell me, how do you feel?"

"Well, I don't feel tip top, and that's a fact," replied Jack feebly, moving about on his bed.

He made as if to sit up, but Frank held him down.

"You stay where you are," he ordered.

"What's the matter?" demanded Jack. "Can't I get up if I feel like it?"

"No," replied Frank, "you can't. You'll stay where you are until the doctor says you are out of danger."

"Danger!" echoed Jack. "You ought to know by this time that I was not made to be killed so easily."

"Nevertheless," said Frank, "you are badly wounded. It will be several days before you will be able to get about."

"Several days!" cried Jack in dismay. "You take my word for it, I'll be up to-morrow."

"You'll stay right where you are until the doctor gives his permission for you to get up," said Frank firmly, "if I have to hold you in."

"Don't you believe it," cried Jack. "I'll be up and out of here to-morrow, or I'll know the reason why."

But he wasn't; for, as Frank had said, he was too badly wounded to be able to get about. The next day and the following one, while the *Lena* continued steadily on her course toward England, Jack was forced to lie in his bed.

It was not until the dawn of the third day that the surgeon gave him permission to go on deck. Supported by Frank's arm, the injured lad made his way to the bridge, where he took a deep breath of the invigorating air.

"By Jove! this feels good," he exclaimed, as a stiff breeze swept across the ship. "Think I'll camp out up here a while."

"Oh, no, you won't," replied Frank. "Just one hour, and then back to bed for you."

"By George! you'd think I was a baby the way you tell me what to do," said Jack, with some show of temper.

"You'll go back when your hour is up, if I have to drag you," said Frank. "And I don't believe you are in condition to put up much resistance."

"I guess you are right," replied Jack ruefully.

His hour up he returned to his cabin and Frank once more tucked him comfortably in bed.

It was several days before Jack was able to get about the ship with his accustomed alacrity; and then the *Lena* was well out of African waters, steaming up the coast of Portugal—the English channel and London now not far away.

Jack had now resumed command of the ship, and the boys, standing together on the bridge one fine morning, were congratulating themselves upon the success of the voyage, when from the lookout came a cry:

"Cruiser off the starboard bow, sir?"

"How is she headed?" demanded Jack.

"Coming right this way, sir."

"Can you make her out?"

"Not yet, sir."

"Let me know as soon as you can," was Jack's command.

It was fully half an hour later, and the cruiser

was not yet plainly discernible to the naked eye, when the lookout called:

"She's British, sir."

"I wouldn't be too sure," muttered Jack to Frank. "She may be flying the English flag and still be an enemy. I don't trust these Germans much."

"Nor I," agreed Frank. "However, we will soon know whether she is friend or foe."

Slowly the cruiser drew nearer. Now the boys were able to make out the British flag flying at her masthead. There came a puff of smoke from the stranger, and a shot passed over the bow of the *Lena*.

"Signal to show our colors," muttered Frank.

At his command the British ensign soon fluttered gayly in the breeze.

Came another shot from the cruiser.

"What's the matter now, do you suppose?" asked Frank. "That's a signal to heave to. If she's British, what does she want us to heave to, for?"

The vessels were still a considerable distance apart, and night was drawing on. The answer to Frank's question came from the approaching vessel.

The British ensign flying at the masthead of the approaching cruiser suddenly came fluttering down, and a moment later the Red, White and Black of Germany fluttered aloft in its stead.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Jack. "I was afraid of it!"

At the same moment another shot crossed the *Lena's* bow.

Jack acted with decision and promptness. At a quick command the *Lena* raised the German flag. Then, as the German commander hesitated, fearing to fire lest the vessel really be of his own country, Jack signaled the engine-room for full speed ahead.

The *Lena* seemed to leap forward, and in a moment had turned her stern to the enemy, thus making her a harder target to hit. The German, evidently taken by surprise, could not bring her guns to bear in a moment, and that moment undoubtedly saved the *Lena.*

The small guns on the *Lena,* at Frank's command, were made ready for instant use, and the men were piped to quarters. Although well aware he was outranged by the enemy, Jack determined to fight his ship to the last.

"They'll know they have been in a battle, unless they sink us before they come in range of our guns," said Jack grimly.

"You bet they will," replied Frank.

"Everything ready?" demanded Jack.

"All ready, sir," replied Frank, with a slight smile and a salute.

The second and third officers made their reports. The British were ready for instant action, and eager for the fray.

"We'll run as long as we can," said Jack, "but,

if we can't outrun them, we'll turn about and give them a fight, anyhow."

This word was passed along to the crew, and a loud British cheer rang out across the waters of the North Atlantic. Frank and Jack were forced to smile.

"The British sailor would always rather fight than run," said Frank.

"Right," said Jack. "This running rather goes against me, too."

Now the forward guns of the German cruiser were brought into action, and heavy detonations rang out across the water. But the German gunners had not yet found the range, and the fact that the *Lena* was so maneuvered as to keep her stern to the enemy made the task of the enemy that much harder.

Darkness fell, and still the flight and pursuit continued, but so far the *Lena* had not been struck by a single shell. She had fired but one shot at the foe—from one of her small guns aft—but this had shown that the German cruiser was not yet within range of the *Lena's* guns.

Now that darkness had fallen the huge searchlight of the German cruiser played full upon the *Lena*. Suddenly Jack and Frank felt a terrific shock, and the Lena, for a moment, seemed to pause in her stride. A shell had struck the stern of the

vessel. There was an explosion and a single high mast crashed to the deck.

Quickly a score of sailors sprang forward, and at a word from Frank, cleared away the wreckage and tumbled it overboard.

"Nothing serious, sir," reported the second officer, after a hurried investigation.

"Good!" said Jack calmly.

Then, so suddenly that it appeared to be the hand of magic, the searchlight of the German cruiser faded from view. Darkness fell over the *Lena*—intense darkness.

The glare of the searchlight had vanished so suddenly that for a brief moment Frank did not determine the cause of it.

"What is it?" he demanded anxiously.

"Fog," replied Jack laconically, "and just in time. With luck, we may make our escape."

The course of the *Lena* was quickly altered, and she once more headed toward the coast of England.

CHAPTER XV.

MISFORTUNE.

At full speed the *Lena* continued her voyage through the dense fog.

"Is there any danger of our colliding with another ship, speeding along like this without knowing what is ahead?" asked Frank in some anxiety.

"Certainly," replied Jack. "However, it is a chance we must take. We know what lies behind, and the way I figure it is that it is better to take a chance on what may lie before rather than on what we know lies behind."

"Right," said Frank, and he became silent.

All night the *Lena* forged ahead at full speed through the fog, which hung thick and dismal overhead and all about; and all this time the boys did not leave the bridge.

The men were allowed to rest at their posts, but were kept on the alert, for, as Jack said, "we must be prepared for anything."

Jack looked at his watch. It was 8 o'clock in the morning; and, even as he glanced at his timepiece, the fog lifted as suddenly as it had enveloped them.

"This is better——" Frank began, and broke off with a cry of amazement.

Not a hundred yards to the leeward his eyes fell upon the dark hull of the German cruiser which had pursued them the night before. Evidently the commander of the vessel had anticipated the course of the *Lena* and had taken the same route. There is no telling in what imminent danger the two had been of a collision during the night, as both had sped along silently, each fearing to betray his presence to the other.

Jack espied the enemy at the same instant that Frank cried out; and he acted upon the instant.

Hoarse commands were shouted across the decks of the *Lena,* and a moment later her small guns burst into sound. In spite of the fact that the enemy must have been on the lookout for the *Lena,* it was apparent that the *Lena* had been the first to realize the presence of the other.

"Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!" spoke the *Lena's* guns, and the sound went hurtling out across the sea.

"Crash! Crash!"

At this close range a miss was almost out of the question, and the *Lena's* shells crashed into the sides of the German cruiser. The German vessel staggered and reeled, but in a moment her big guns answered the smaller caliber ones of the *Lena.*

The *Lena* quivered like a human thing under the

deadly hail of fire from the enemy. The great guns raked the merchantship from stem to stern, pierced her until her sides resembled nothing more than a sieve. Men fell everywhere, many prisoners being killed by fragments. But still the *Lena* continued to fight back.

Standing upon the bridge Jack directed the fighting of his ship. He realized in the first moment of contact that the doom of the *Lena* was sealed. She was no match for the German cruiser, but, before going down, it was his intention to do as much damage as possible to the enemy. And the fire of the *Lena* was doing terrific damage.

Men fell on the cruiser as well as on the *Lena*. Shells crashed aboard, tumbling down masts, bursting in the mouths of the guns and hurling showers of iron about. Grimy-faced men ran hither and thither about the decks of both vessels. They had long since lost all resemblance to human beings, and all fought like demons.

The German commander did not call upon the British to surrender. Evidently he did not wish to be bothered with prizes. To sink the enemy—that was his sole aim.

One by one the guns of the *Lena* were put out of action, until finally but two remained to reply to the fire of the enemy. Slowly the head of the *Lena* swung round, to permit of these last two guns being brought to bear.

"Boom! Boom!" They spoke their last message, and two shells pierced the very heart of the German cruiser.

There was a sudden, terrific explosion. A fierce red sheet of flame leaped from the German cruiser, and shot high in the air. The center turret rose with the flame and fell back to the waters of the North Atlantic in a million pieces.

The magazine of the cruiser had blown up. Her vitals were opened and the waters engulfed her.

The two lads stood on the bridge of the *Lena*, open-mouthed, awed by this spectacle. Both were too surprised to speak. At the very moment when the battle seemed lost, one well-directed shot had turned the fortunes of war in favor of the arms of the British.

At length Frank spoke.

"It is a miracle!" he exclaimed.

"No," replied Jack calmly, "not a miracle; rather, the courage and bravery of the sons of Britain are responsible for this good fortune."

He turned his eyes upon the floating wreckage. Not a survivor was in sight. "Poor fellows!" he said, half aloud, "may they rest in peace!"

At this moment the chief engineer came rushing on deck. Blood streamed down his face and one arm hung limp at his side.

"The engines are out of commission, sir," he re-

ported, "and there is three feet of water in the engine-room. The ship is sinking!"

Jack drew himself up to his full height and shouted out his orders:

"Man the boats!" he cried.

He called the second and third officers.

"Look after the wounded," he commanded. "See that they are all placed in the boats. Release the prisoners, but they must shift for themselves."

"And the dead, sir?" questioned the second officer.

Jack lifted his cap from his head.

"The dead," he said softly, "must be left to the mercy of the sea. We can do them no good."

The second officer saluted and hurried away.

Frank and Jack superintended the lowering of the boats. Each small craft already contained a quantity of provisions and water, and, at Jack's command, such small arms as could be hurriedly secured were thrown overboard. The wounded were lifted gently into the boats—the dead left where they had fallen. The last act was to release the prisoners. That was all that could be done for them.

At last all the boats were manned, and, at a word from Jack, they put away from the ship. Each boat was crowded, for some had been damaged in the battle with the German cruiser and made unfit for use.

Slowly the boats pulled away from the *Lena*.

"Which way?" asked Frank.

"Due east," replied Jack. "We must be some place off the coast of France, and, unless a storm arises, we stand a good chance of reaching land safely."

He cast his eyes toward the *Lena.*

"And hurry!" he commanded. "The *Lena* is likely to go down any moment, and, if we do not put some distance between us, she is likely to carry us under also."

The men in the boats bent to their work with a will, and soon they were out of danger.

"There she goes!" exclaimed Frank suddenly, and, standing up in the boat, he pointed a finger toward the *Lena.*

Slowly the ship had been settling by the head. Now she sank lower and lower in the water. A terrible hissing arose and went forth across the sea. The water had reached her boilers.

Then the bow of the ship climbed clear out of the water, for a moment pointed almost straight toward the sky—it seemed that she would turn completely over—then suddenly lurched heavily forward, and dived.

The water foamed angrily white, parted quietly for the *Lena,* as she took her death plunge, rose high in the air; then, its fury over, closed calmly over her. The *Lena* was gone.

"And so," said Jack sadly, "goes my first command!"

Frank laid his hand on his friend's arm.

"It's pretty tough," he said, "but there is no use crying over spilt milk. What can't be cured must be endured, you know."

"You are right," replied Jack, "and the thing to do now is to try and reach land."

Standing up in the boat and shading his eyes with one hand he looked eastward across the water for a long time. Then he sat down.

"See anything?" Frank asked.

"No."

"Have you any idea how far we are from shore?"

"I don't believe we can be very far away. With clear weather and steady rowing I believe we should make land within twenty-four hours, at least."

"Well," said Frank, "when we get ashore, what then?"

"Why," replied Jack, "we must return to London if we can and report to the Admiralty."

"And then what?"

"Then," said Jack slowly, "I hope we shall once more be assigned to a ship that is going into battle, that we may avenge ourselves for the loss of the *Lena,* and, yes, the death of Lord Hastings!"

CHAPTER XVI.

UNDER THE TRICOLOR.

It was to be many a long day before Frank and Jack were destined to see London again.

All day, following the loss of the *Lena,* the little boats bobbed up and down on the smooth sea, as they headed eastward as fast as strong British arms could drive them. All day the sun shone brightly, but as night drew on the air became cold and penetrating. The men wrapped themselves up as tightly as they could, but even this did not keep out the chill.

Frank and Jack took turns sleeping and in keeping watch. At length the darkness began to give way to light; and, in the cold gray dawn of another day Jack, standing watch in the first boat, made out something in the distance that caused him to utter a loud cry.

Because of the intense darkness they had approached thus close without having gained a glimpse of what Jack now saw.

It was land.

Frank, aroused by Jack's cry, was on his feet in an instant and echoed his friend's cry of joy.

"Where do you suppose we are?" he asked.

"At a rough guess, I should say off the coast of France," was Jack's reply.

"Good! Then we should be perfectly safe."

"I wouldn't be too sure of that," said Jack. "You never can tell what is going to happen in times like these. However, we will land as soon as possible."

The sun was high in the sky when the first of the little boats, rounding a sharp promontory, came in sight of a large vessel. She was plainly a ship of war, anchored a mile off the coast in a little bay. Beyond the lads could make out the houses of what appeared to be a small town.

"Wonder what place that is?" said Frank.

"I don't know," replied Jack, "but we'll soon find out. See! Our presence has been discovered."

Frank looked in the direction Jack pointed. It was true. They were close enough to the vessel now for the lads to make out several figures standing upon the deck, pointing toward them and gesticulating.

A moment later and the guns on the vessel shone in the sunlight, as the ship came about. They were pointed squarely at the little British flotilla.

A flag was quickly run up to the masthead. The boys made it out in an instant—the tricolor of France. A cheer went up from the British sailors, and in one of the boats a sailor sprang to his feet and waved a British ensign above his head.

This was seen from the deck of the French vessel, and several small boats were hurriedly manned and came toward the British. Within hailing distance a voice cried out in French:

"Who are you and where from?"

"British prize crew aboard German merchantman, which was sunk by a German cruiser yesterday," Jack shouted back.

The French boats approached closer. The men in them were all armed, and it was plainly apparent they were not too confident of the identity of the British. They held their rifles ready for instant use, and small rapid-firers in the prow of each craft were ready for business.

But now that the French had approached close enough for their commander to distinguish the faces of the English sailors the tenseness of the French sailors relaxed, and they came on more confidently. The French officer ran his boat close to the one occupied by Frank and Jack and leaped lightly aboard it. The lads rose to greet him.

All three saluted, and the French officer said:

"I'm glad to see you."

"Not half as glad as we are to see you," replied Jack with enthusiasm. "This time yesterday we didn't know whether we would ever see land again or not."

"You have been adrift all that time?" questioned the officer.

"Yes, sir."

"You said something about having been sunk by a German cruiser. Why didn't they pick you up?"

"Because they were already at the bottom of the sea," replied Jack calmly.

"You mean that you sunk them with the small guns of your ship?" asked the officer in great wonderment.

"Yes," replied Jack briefly. "We were fortunate enough to do that with our last shot."

"Good for you!" ejaculated the officer. "But come! You must go aboard the *Marie Theresa.* Captain Dreyfuss will indeed be glad to greet two such gallant Englishmen."

It was fully half an hour later, the lads in the meantime having seen to the disposition of the British sailors aboard the French cruiser, before Jack and Frank were seated in the commander's cabin, relating their experiences to him.

"And what do you plan to do now?" asked the commander, after he had complimented the boys upon their gallant conduct.

"Well," replied Frank, "we had thought of returning to London. By the way, just whereabouts are we?"

The commander swept an arm in the direction of the little town.

"That," he said, "is St. Julien, on the southern coast of France. Bordeaux is to the north, and, in

the event that you are planning to return to London, it will be necessary to go that way. If I were bound that way, I would gladly land you there, but I am not."

"May I ask which way you are going?" asked Frank.

"I am bound for the Adriatic," replied the commander, "to join the rest of the French fleet blockading the Austrians there."

"By Jove!" ejaculated Jack suddenly, struck with a sudden idea. "Why cannot we go with you, Captain Dreyfuss."

"Go with me?" echoed the commander of the *Marie Theresa.*

"Yes," cried Frank, falling in with the idea at once. "May we, captain?"

The captain mused silently for some time.

"It would be very irregular," he said at length.

"We would certainly be pleased to see service under another flag," persisted Jack.

Indeed we would," agreed Frank; "and we would be willing to go in any capacity. If we go to London we may have a long wait before being assigned to another ship."

Suddenly Captain Dreyfuss slapped his leg with his hand and got to his feet.

"It shall be done," he said; "and, I may say that I shall be glad of your company. I will have you shown your quarters. As it happens, I am short-

handed. I shall see that your crew is set ashore and given passage for London."

At his signal a young midshipman entered the cabin and came to attention.

"I place these young men in your charge," Captain Dreyfuss said to him. "You will show them quarters. From this time on they will be your shipmates."

The young Frenchman saluted, and the lads followed him from the commander's cabin.

He showed them to very neat quarters and said abruptly:

"You will bunk here."

He departed without another word. Frank and Jack stared after him in some surprise.

"Nice, pleasant companion he'll make," said Frank with fine sarcasm.

"I should say so," answered Jack. "From his actions you'd think we had done something to offend him."

"Oh, well," said Frank, "I guess we don't need to worry a whole lot about him."

"No," said Jack, "but just the same I would rather be on good terms with all on board."

The British sailors had now been gathered on deck and Frank and Jack went up to bid them goodby. As they were rowed away in the direction of the little town the sailors stood up in the boats and

gave three lusty cheers for both lads. The lads waved their hats at them.

"You'd think these English were somebody," came a voice from Frank's elbow, and turning the lad saw several French midshipmen standing nearby. "They leave us to do all the fighting," continued one, whom Frank now recognized as the one who had escorted them to their quarters. "If they fought as well as they talk, this war wouldn't last long."

Frank took a quick step toward the speaker, but Jack's hand fell on his arm and stayed him.

"Quiet," said Jack. "We don't want to have any trouble with them. Besides their words do not apply to you. You are American."

"You are right," said Frank, and turned away.

Suddenly Captain Dreyfuss' voice rang out on the bridge. Instantly all became bustle and confusion. The *Marie Theresa* was about to get under way. Not yet having been assigned to their duties, Jack and Frank stood a little to one side.

Slowly the big battle cruiser got under way. With her flag flying proudly, she turned her stern toward the shore and made for the open sea. Soon she was heading southward at full speed.

Now a second midshipman approached the lads.

"I am instructed to show you your duties," he said, without enthusiasm, and the boys could see that he was not well pleased with his task.

Frank stepped up to him and held out his hand.

"See here," he said, "why can't we be friends?"

The Frenchman took the proffered hand and shook it half-heartedly. He glanced furtively about, evidently in fear that some of his comrades might see him in this compromising situation. Then, as rapidly as possible, he instructed the lads in their tasks.

"And now," he concluded, "dinner is ready. You will mess with the other midshipmen. Come, I will show you the way."

Without a word the lads followed him. The long table was already filled, but there were still some vacant seats. Frank and Jack dropped into these.

"Midshipman Templeton and Midshipman Chadwick," said their escort, introducing them to the rest, with a sweep of his arm.

Frank and Jack rose from their seats and bowed. The young Frenchmen barely acknowledged the introduction with nods of their heads.

Frank's face flushed, and he made as if to rise, but again Jack stayed him, and they fell to eating in silence. Several times during the meal some Frenchman inadvertently made a remark derogatory to the fighting ability of the English.

Frank held his temper, though his face burned, and Jack was fearful that his friend would soon be mixed up in trouble again. However, the meal

finally came to an end, and Jack and Frank arose with the others to leave the room.

To the deck below, where the midshipmen were wont to spend most of their leisure hours, the lads followed the Frenchmen. Here some drew cigarettes from their pockets, and, in spite of the regulations against this practice, proceeded to light up in most approved style.

Then they broke up into little knots, and Jack and Frank found themselves left to themselves.

"Come," said Jack at length, "we might as well go on deck."

He took Frank by the arm and started away. As they neared the door, a big, hulking Frenchman suddenly stretched forth a foot, and Frank, who had not noticed this obstruction, tripped and fell heavily to the deck.

He was up in a moment, his face a dull red. He turned on the now giggling midshipmen angrily.

"Who did that?" he demanded, taking a step forward and doubling up his fists.

A laugh went round the room, but there was no reply.

"Who did that?" demanded Frank again.

The big French middie who had tripped the lad stepped forward.

"I did it," he replied, thrusting out his face. "What of it?"

"Just this," replied Frank, and started forward.

Jack stopped him.

"Here's where I get into this," he said quietly. "I tried to keep out, but it's no use. Stand aside, Frank, can't you see you are no match for him?"

"Step aside nothing," said Frank, struggling in Jack's grasp. "I never saw a Frenchman yet I couldn't lick."

"Well," said Jack calmly, "this is one you won't lick. I'm going to do it myself. It's my fight, anyway!"

In vain did Frank struggle. He was like a child in his friend's strong hands.

The big Frenchman thrust his face forward again.

"So you are going to interfere, are you?" he said.

"Yes," said Jack pleasantly, "and you'll wish I hadn't."

"Then take that," cried the Frenchman, and struck out suddenly.

Jack leaped back quickly, but he was not swift enough to entirely avoid the blow. A tiny stream of blood trickled from his nose. Without a word he calmly drew a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped away the red drops. Then he stepped forward and spoke to all.

"Now," he said quietly, "this man is going to pay for that. Are you gentlemen here? Will you see that this is conducted in a proper manner, or is it to be a rough-and-tumble?"

One of the French middies stepped forward suddenly. He offered Jack his hand.

"I'll see that it is conducted ship-shape," he said. "You impress me as a brave man, and I'll see that you get fair play."

"Thanks," said Jack laconically, accepting his hand.

"I might as well tell you, however," continued the Frenchman, "that you are up against more than your match. This man is one of the heavyweight aspirants for the championship of the French navy, and has several scalps to his credit."

"I guess he hasn't bumped up against an Englishman," was Jack's reply.

"What's it to be?" asked the Frenchman.

"Anything suits me," said Jack.

"To a finish," grumbled Jack's antagonist.

Quickly a square was marked off, and, enjoining the spectators to silence, the young Frenchman who appeared more friendly than the rest as self-appointed referee called time.

Jack and his opponent squared off.

CHAPTER XVII.

JACK MAKES A NAME FOR HIMSELF.

FRANK, who had never seen Jack exhibit his prowess in the fistic art, and who was rather a skillful boxer himself, though by no means a heavyweight, muttered to himself:

"Why didn't I insist on taking him on myself? Jack is due for a good lacing. He's strong enough, but he hasn't the science, I'm afraid."

He stood nervously in his friend's corner.

The Frenchman opened the fight with a rush, and his friends uttered subdued cheers and encouragement as he dashed at Jack. In size, it appeared that the two were about evenly matched, although the Frenchman was a shade taller than his opponent.

That his comrades believed him a master of the fistic art was evinced by their cries:

"Finish him up quickly."

"Let him stay a couple of rounds."

"No; one round's enough."

The Frenchman rushed, evidently having decided to finish the fight as quickly as possible. His expression showed that he had no doubt of his ability

to polish off the Englishman and of his superiority as a boxer.

Jack met the first rush calmly, and with a slight smile on his face. His guard was perfect and not a blow reached him. The Frenchman landed blow after blow upon Jack's arms, with which the lad covered first his face and then his body.

Frank, having a knowledge of boxing, realized that he was witnessing a defense that was indeed remarkable, and muttered happily to himself. But to the rest of the spectators it appeared that their idol was hitting his man at will, and they continued to encourage him with low words, at the same time hurling epithets at Jack.

So far Jack had not attempted to strike a blow; nor had he given ground. He had presented a perfect defense to his opponent, who danced rapidly about him, striking from this side and that. The round ended, and still Jack had not offered at his opponent.

The Frenchman himself, however, skillful boxer that he was, was not deceived. He realized, as he rested in his corner, that he had met a foeman worthy of the best he had to offer. As yet, though, he had no means of telling what the lad had in store for an attack of his own; but he realized that Jack's defense was well-nigh perfect.

Therefore, when they advanced to the middle of the ring for the second round, he was more wary,

for he had no mind to let Jack slip over a hard blow through carelessness. Suddenly Jack led with his right, then made as if to land with his left. The Frenchman threw up his arm to guard the latter blow, and Jack's right, which had not been checked —the feint with the left having made the desired opening—caught the Frenchman flush on the nose.

The Frenchman staggered back. Jack followed this advantage with a quick left and then another right to the Frenchman's face. Both blows had steam behind them, and his opponent, plainly in distress, covered up quickly and clinched.

In the clinch he attempted to deliver several short-arm blows, but Jack was prepared for this kind of fighting, and blocked them with ease. Finally the two broke, and the Frenchman stood on the defensive.

It was apparent to all who were not too prejudiced that he now stood in awe of his opponent's hitting power.

Then they stood off and boxed at long range, and Jack trimmed his adversary beautifully. Tiring of this, the Frenchman rushed, but time was called as he swung wildly. In swinging he left a wide opening. Jack, starting a hard blow, turned it aside as the referee called time.

"Where did you learn to box?" asked Frank breathlessly between rounds.

"Why," said Jack, with a smile, "from my father. He was rather proficient in the use of his fists."

"He must have been," said Frank dryly. "Why didn't you tell me you could box?"

"You never asked me," replied Jack calmly.

He arose and walked slowly to meet his opponent, as the referee again called time.

"Now, my friend," said Jack to his opponent, "I am going to give you as good a licking as you ever have had."

He feinted with dazzling rapidity several times, and drove a straight left to the Frenchman's ear. With lightning-like quickness he played a tattoo upon the Frenchman's face and body. Bewildered, his opponent dashed into a clinch.

"If you say so, we'll call this off right here," said Jack.

The Frenchman suddenly freed himself, and his reply to this kindly offer was to send a jab to Jack's nose, drawing blood.

"Just for that," said Jack quietly, who felt somewhat ashamed at having been caught off his guard, "I'll finish this fight right now. There is no need prolonging it."

Once, twice, he rocked the Frenchman's head, and then, as the latter came forward in a last desperate effort, Jack pivoted on his heel, and, starting his left low, swung. The Frenchman checked himself in his attack, and desperately tried to leap back.

But it was too late. Through his guard went the blow, and, catching the Frenchman on the point of the chin, it lifted him from his feet and into the air.

At least four feet through the air went the Frenchman, and came to the deck, head first, at the feet of his friends. He lay there while the referee counted him out.

Quickly Jack leaped forward, and, kneeling, raised his late opponent's head.

"Water, some of you," he called.

It was quickly brought, and Jack, wetting his handkerchief, bathed the Frenchman's face. His efforts were at last rewarded by a slight groan, and finally the unconscious man opened his eyes.

"What hit me?" he asked in a faint whisper.

"It's all right, old man," said Jack. "You'll be all right in a second."

Slowly the light of comprehension dawned in the Frenchman's eyes. He struggled to his feet, where he stood uncertainly for a few moments, looking at his conqueror.

Jack extended a hand.

"I'm sorry I had to do it," he said, a pleasant smile lighting up his face.

The Frenchman looked at him in silence for a full minute, then, stepping forward, he grasped the outstretched hand.

"What are you," he demanded, grinning, "a prizefighter?"

"No," said Jack, with a laugh, "but I guess I have had better training than you."

"Well," said the Frenchman, "if you ever need anybody to help you out, you can count on me. Maybe some day you will bump up against someone who can best you, but I believe the two of us together can put him down."

"Thanks," laughed Jack, "I'll remember that offer when the time comes."

The other French middies now gathered round and shook Jack and Frank both by the hand, while the one who had first made himself odious apologized profusely for his actions.

"Say no more about it," exclaimed Frank. "I'm glad we're all friends at last."

Further conversation was interrupted by the sudden sound of a bugle on deck. It was the call to quarters.

Quickly all sprang to their posts. Men dashed hither and thither, and in almost less time than it takes to tell it the *Marie Theresa* was cleared for action.

Then, at last having time to glance about, the two lads made out the cause of this sudden call. Several miles across the water could be seen two small cruisers. A closer look showed the boys the German flag flying at the masthead of each.

"Now," said Frank to Jack, "we'll have an opportunity of seeing how the French fight."

"They'll fight," said Jack briefly. "You may make sure of that."

"Nevertheless I would rather that we had an English crew."

Now the range was signaled to the gunners, and the *Marie Theresa* quivered and recoiled as the first of her big guns spoke. The shot fell short. Again the range was signaled, and once more the shot fell short, though nearer, the first of the German cruisers.

The third shot plowed up the water under her bow.

"We have the range now," said Jack, "we'll hit her next time."

His words proved true. A solid shot, hurled by one of the *Marie Theresa's* forward guns, struck the first German cruiser squarely in the side. The two following ones hit her just below the water line.

"That's pretty good shooting, if you ask me," said Frank enthusiastically.

But now the Germans also had succeeded in finding the range, and a shell burst over the *Marie Theresa,* hurling its fragments upon the deck. Five men went down, never to rise again.

As the battle progressed the two German cruisers drew farther and farther apart, until now they

poured their fire upon the *Marie Theresa* from two directions. To avoid this cross fire, the commander of the *Marie Theresa* signaled full speed ahead, and dashed straight for the nearest of the enemy.

In spite of the galling fire from both of the enemy, the *Marie Theresa* bore down on the German cruiser. Too late the latter turned to flee from her larger opponent; but her guns continued to pour in her fire.

Although raked from stem to stern, the *Marie Theresa* had not been hit in a vital spot. The first German cruiser turned to run, but, by a quick maneuver, Captain Dreyfuss plowed into her as she turned. The sharp prow of the *Marie Theresa* crashed into the German amidships, and so terrific was the impact that the French ship recoiled.

But it was the death-blow of the German cruiser. Men leaped into the small boats and put off from the ship, or flung themselves head first into the sea. The *Marie Theresa* drew off and turned her attention to the other German cruiser.

But the latter had had enough. She turned quickly and headed west. Boats were lowered from the *Marie Theresa* and hurried to the aid of the survivors of the enemy. Many were picked up and taken aboard the French ship.

On the bridge of the German cruiser, now settling fast, could be seen the German commander. Several officers were gathered about him. They

were gesticulating violently, but to each the captain shook his head negatively.

"They'll all be drowned if they don't hurry," said Captain Dreyfuss anxiously. "Why don't the fools jump!"

Suddenly the German commander drew a revolver from his pocket, and pointed it directly at the protesting officers. They drew back. The German commander followed them.

One by one they threw themselves into the sea—all but one. At him the commander pointed his revolver, and shook his head vigorously. The latter protested.

Finally the German commander hurled his weapon far into the sea, and held out his hand. The officer took it, and, arm in arm, the two walked back to the bridge.

The German cruiser lurched heavily, but the two German officers were unmindful of it. Calmly the commander drew two cigars from his pocket, and offered one to the officer. The latter accepted it, and, taking a match from his pocket, struck it calmly.

He held the match so his commander could get a light, then lighted his own cigar. Thus the two stood, calmly smoking, as the cruiser settled.

Slowly the fatally wounded craft sank lower and lower in the water, until nothing was visible below the bridge. Then, with a sudden lurch, this too

disappeared—nothing but the mast remained—then nothing at all.

The German commander had gone down with his ship—as had so many before him—as would so many after him.

The commander of the *Marie Theresa* lifted his cap, uttering no word—a silent tribute to a hero.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE ADRIATIC.

THE *Marie Theresa* had not escaped unscathed in the combat, but, although her injuries were not serious, they were such as to prevent a pursuit of the second German cruiser, which was now dashing away at full speed.

The crew set to work with a will clearing up the wreckage, and finally the vessel was shipshape once more. Then, at a command from Captain Dreyfuss, she was put on her course toward the south.

Several uneventful days passed, during which Frank and Jack struck up quite a friendship with their fellow middies. The unkindly spirit of the young Frenchmen gave way to real comradeship, and all were now on the best of terms.

It was on a bright, sunny morning that the *Marie Theresa* steamed through the entrance to the Adriatic Sea, where the French fleet, with one or two British warships, had the entire Austrian naval force cooped up. The Austrians had made several dashes, in an attempt to run the blockade, but so far all such efforts had been unsuccessful.

As the *Marie Theresa* steamed up to the other

vessels of the fleet, she was greeted with a salute. A short time later Captain Dreyfuss put off for the flagship in a small boat to pay his respects to the admiral.

It was late when he returned aboard the *Marie Theresa,* and immediately he set foot on board a subdued air of excitement became apparent. The midshipmen, not being in the confidence of the superior officers, at first could not account for this; but they soon learned its cause.

The *Marie Theresa* had been ordered to try and get closer to the Austrian fleet.

It was a well-known fact that all the Austrian ports had been mined, and that the heavy shore batteries of the enemy were more than a match for the big guns on the cruiser—that they outranged them—but, nevertheless, the crew of the *Marie Theresa* made what preparations were necessary with enthusiasm.

It was well after nightfall when the French cruiser moved slowly between the other vessels of the allied fleet, heading for the enemy. Not a light shone aboard the vessel, and there was not a sound to break the stillness of the night.

Beyond the rest of the fleet the *Marie Theresa* was forced to go more slowly, feeling her way cautiously to avoid being blown up by one of the many floating mines.

"This is ticklish work," said Jack to Frank, as they moved slowly along.

"You bet," was the latter's reply. "This thing of floating along, not knowing the next minute you are liable to be on the bottom, would try anybody's nerves. By Jove! I can feel my hair standing on end now."

"I guess it's not as bad as all that," laughed Jack.

"Well, I have a bad case of nerves, anyhow," replied Frank.

Suddenly, at a subdued cry from forward, the *Marie Theresa* came to a halt.

"Vessel of some sort dead ahead," the word was passed along.

A moment later a voice of command rang out:

"Pass the word for Mr. Chadwick and Mr. Templeton."

"Wonder what's up?" asked Frank, as they made their way to the bridge, where Captain Dreyfuss was standing.

"I guess we'll know soon enough," was Jack's reply.

They halted before their commander and came to attention.

"If I am not mistaken," said Captain Dreyfuss, pointing ahead, "that dark hull there is an Austrian vessel, whether a warship or not I cannot say. Now the success of this venture depends upon silence. A shot from a big gun aboard that ship would mean

failure for us. I have called you two lads to ask if you would like to undertake a dangerous task?"

"Yes, sir," replied Jack quietly.

"We shall be only too glad," said Frank eagerly.

"Well, then," continued Captain Dreyfuss, "I believe that by a quick and silent dash you may be able to board her. If you are successful in getting aboard, your first duty will be to prevent the firing of one of the big guns. Luckily, we are still far from shore, so the sounds of a hand-to-hand struggle are not likely to be overheard. Are you willing to undertake this mission?"

"Yes, sir," replied both lads in a single voice.

"Good! You shall have fifty men. With the effect of a surprise, I believe this should be enough."

Half an hour later, while the *Marie Theresa* remained stationary, not even showing a light, Frank and Jack, with five small boats at their command, were creeping silently toward the Austrian vessel. Nearer and nearer they approached, and at length the first boat scraped the side of the larger vessel.

So far their presence had not been discovered.

Softly and silently Jack led the way to the deck of the enemy, which, it was now plain, was a small Austrian cruiser. Frank and the French sailors followed close at his heels.

As Jack's head came even with the rail, he paused to look about. And it was well that he did so. For not ten paces from him stood an Austrian sailor.

His eyes were turned in the opposite direction, and so stealthily did Jack now lower himself to the deck that he was not heard.

"I hate to do this," he muttered to himself, but——"

A moment later his revolver butt crashed down on the Austrian's skull. The man dropped like a log. Hastily the lad led the way to the bridge, where, by quick action, the man on watch was overcome without the sound of a struggle.

Then half of the French turned their attention to the commander's cabin, while the others hastened to see that all means of egress from below were barred.

With drawn revolver Jack entered the cabin first. His eyes fell upon two officers playing checkers, one evidently the commander of the cruiser. So quietly did the lad enter the room that his presence was not discovered until he spoke.

"Hands up!" he commanded.

The officers leaped to their feet with a single movement, and the hand of the commander fell upon his revolver, while the other, unarmed though he was, dashed straight at Jack.

Jack's revolver spoke sharply once, and the second Austrian officer tumbled in a heap to the deck. Before the commander could draw his weapon Jack had him covered.

"None of that," he said sharply, as the commander made another move as though to draw.

The Austrian commander evidently thought better of his act, for his hands flew above his head. Jack advanced quickly and relieved him of his weapons. Then he marched him to the bridge.

"Now," said Jack calmly, "you will signal the engine-room for half-speed ahead."

The officer started to protest, but at the sight of Jack's revolver, leveled right at his head, he reconsidered and did as ordered. Jack now motioned Frank to stand guard over the Austrian commander, and himself took the wheel.

Slowly the Austrian cruiser, her head describing a wide circle, gathered speed and turned in the direction of the allied fleet. Evidently those below had no idea that anything was wrong, for not a sound reached the ears of those on deck.

Now, at Jack's command, the commander signaled the engine-room for full speed ahead, and the pace of the cruiser increased. Swiftly she dashed along in the night, but was suddenly checked in her flight by a hail from across the water:

"What ship is that?"

Jack recognized the voice of Captain Dreyfuss, and called back:

"Captured Austrian cruiser, sir. This is Templeton. What shall I do with her?"

"Take her on to the fleet," came the reply.

"Good work! I shall not wait for you to return, but will continue immediately."

This was a disappointment to the two lads, who had banked on being aboard the *Marie Theresa* in her raid. However, orders were not to be disobeyed.

Day was breaking when the Austrian cruiser steamed in among the French ships. Jack went aboard the admiral's flagship and reported. It was while he was standing beside the admiral that a fearful commotion broke out on board the captured Austrian cruiser.

There was the sound of a big gun, and a shell screamed overhead.

"The fools!" exclaimed the admiral. "Can't they understand they have been captured?"

Evidently the Austrians could not, for a second shell screamed overhead.

Quickly the flagship signaled the French aboard the captured vessel to leave, and when they were over the side and well out of harm's way the French dreadnought opened fire on the cruiser.

Men now emerged from below on to the deck of the captured vessel, and rushed rapidly about.

An officer leveled a glass and took in the imposing sight of the French gathered about on all sides of him.

In another moment a white flag was run up at the masthead. It was the sign of surrender.

The French admiral complimented both lads highly on the success of their venture; and congratulated them again personally that night, when the *Marie Theresa,* after a successful raid into the very midst of the Austrian fleet, returned unscathed —leaving at the bottom of the sea two Austrian torpedo boats.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BATTLE IN THE ADRIATIC.

The French and Austrian fleets were steaming into battle in the Adriatic. This coming struggle, while it was to be by no means decisive, was nevertheless the first engagement of any magnitude to be fought in southern waters; also it was the first in which fighters of the air were to play an important part.

The *Marie Theresa,* back from her successful raid, was one of the foremost in the French line of battle. Now, as she steamed forward with the rest of the fleet, her hydroplanes were made ready for action.

Captain Dreyfuss summoned Jack and Frank before him.

"You will each take a seat in one of the hydroplanes," he ordered. "Your duties will be to drop bombs on the enemy. Each machine carries two men, one a pilot. Therefore you will each take separate machines."

Frank and Jack saluted, and a moment later were in their places. What was Jack's surprise to find that the pilot of his machine was none other than

the French midshipman he had so lately engaged in fistic combat. The latter, whom the boys had learned to call Pierre, greeted him with a smile.

"I'm glad I am to have you along," he said simply.

"Thanks," was Jack's brief reply.

The French hydroplanes, at least fifty of them, from all the battleships, now skimmed over the water, and a moment later soared in the air. Flying on beyond the French ships, a smudge of smoke came into view, then another, and then many more. Ships of all kinds, Jack could see, dreadnoughts, cruisers, torpedo boats and scout ships, advancing toward them.

Then, as they drew nearer, Jack made out other vessels, lying low in the water, without smoke, approaching. These were the Austrian submarines. Jack counted the enemy—sixteen ships of all classes—and opposed to these the French had offered almost an equal number. The forces of both sides under and above the sea, of course, he could not count.

Some of the airships from both sides now came into contact, and brisk skirmishes ensued. Rifles flashed from them, and suddenly one tumbled into the sea. It was an Austrian craft, and it was first blood for the French.

Now the aircraft, at a signal, returned to their respective fleets, and hovered over them. The speed

of both squadrons was reduced, as they drew closer together. The submarines of both fleets suddenly sank from sight, and it was evident to Jack that the first blows probably would be struck from under water.

The aircraft once more advanced, flying low, seeking to learn the positions of the submarines, and to point them out to the gunners on the big battleships and cruisers. A periscope, extending a few feet above water, gave Jack a good target, and the lad dropped a bomb.

There was a terrific explosion below the water. The periscope disappeared. There was one Austrian submarine less.

The two squadrons of ships meantime were drawing nearer together. The first French battleship, the flagship of the squadron, was now engaged with the first ship of the Austrian squadron. They were engaged gun for gun.

Now the second ships of each fleet came into action, and then the third. Ship after ship engaged the enemy, until the battle became general. For an instant, after each salvo, the rival squadrons were hidden from each other by the smoke of battle, but a brisk wind soon blew this away, and the cannonading continued.

Now one of the French vessels steered aside and dropped behind the line of battle. She was disabled.

The next ship moved up, and the French advance continued as before.

The torpedo craft of the French, gathered behind the French battle line, dashed forward suddenly, headlong for the Austrian fleet. For two miles they sped on, apparently unnoticed by the enemy, then the great turret guns of the Austrians opened on them. The French torpedo craft began to suffer.

Two together swung broadside to the Austrians, riddled with holes; the boiler of a third burst, the ship broke in two and sank almost instantly. But the others raced on.

Toward the big Austrian battleships they dashed. Austrian torpedo boats rushed out to meet them. A shell from a French warship struck one of these, and she went to the bottom immediately. Others suffered by the French fire.

Four thousand yards from the Austrian fleet the French torpedo boats launched their torpedoes; then they fled back to the protection of the battleships, still engaged with the Austrian pursuers with small guns.

But they had done their work. A hundred torpedoes, driven by their motors of compressed air just below the surface, were steering automatically for the Austrian battleships.

Suddenly the fourth ship of the Austrian line staggered; a white spray of water leaped high in the air, and the Austrian vessel split into many

pieces. The first torpedo had gone home. The fifth and sixth Austrian battleships also now leaped from the water, and then sank from sight. Farther back another Austrian ship dropped from the line of battle.

Now a school of Austrian torpedo craft dashed forward again. They were met by a fierce hail of fire from the French, but in spite of this they succeeded in launching their torpedoes, and the French battleship, far back, suddenly disappeared from the surface of the Adriatic.

Now the battle grew so terrific that individual ship movements could not be kept track of. The Austrian torpedo craft retreated and the French gave chase. Jack and Frank saw all this, soaring above the sea, a part of it, and yet not a part of it, for so far they had had little to do.

Pierre, seated in front of Jack, suddenly uttered a shout. Following the direction of the pilot's eyes, Jack perceived a great, gray, pencil-shaped object approaching through the air. He recognized it instantly—a German war dirigible, sent to help the Austrians. Under it flew smaller forms, aëroplanes accompanying it as guard. And now a second Zeppelin appeared—and then a third.

Swiftly they swept over the sea. A moment and they had passed over the broken line of Austrian battleships, and sped on toward the French fleet. The French perceived the menace, and their special

quick-firers, elevated for aëroplane defense, came into action.

But the Zeppelins bored on, and their powerful guns fired down macarite shells. The first French battleship, already stripped by the raking fire of the Austrian fleet, seemed to crumple up, and a moment later disappeared altogether.

The rain of shells from above found breaches in the armor of a second French ship, caught a magazine forward and exploded it, almost at the same time blew up a magazine aft, and the ship, broken in two, sank.

The first dirigible, having passed over the French fleet, now turned and came back. The shells of the ships burst harmlessly below it. As the torpedo boats had gathered for an attack against the Austrian fleet, so now did the French aircraft gather for an assault upon these enemies of the air.

But the enemy's airmen did not wait for them. They charged. Machines met, wing against wing, and toppled into the water. Others, their propellers crushed, met the same fate. But some of the French machines burst through, only to be met by the deadly fire of the Zeppelins and sent into the sea.

Yet a few survived, and their rifle bullets riddled the gas chambers of the big balloons, but these tiny perforations availed nothing. The French flyers who survived darted beyond the Zeppelins and withdrew. The attack had accomplished little, for, while

some of the Austrian aëroplanes had been sent into the sea, the dirigibles were still intact. A means for successful attack against these giants of the air had not been found.

But now, in response to a word of command from Jack, Pierre nodded his head in understanding. In the meantime the French birdmen had re-formed and had rushed forward in another gallant attack. But the result was the same, and, while they succeeded in accounting for some of the smaller planes, the Zeppelins continued to fight as before, dropping their powerful shells upon the French fleet below.

But this time there was one plane that did not swerve as it burst through the Austrian line of small planes, and darted toward the first dirigible. Straight on it rushed, absolutely reckless, and crashed into the first giant balloon, head-on—collapsing the great forward gas chamber, setting it on fire, exploding it, blowing all the mighty war balloon to atoms.

In this plane were Jack and Pierre. It was Jack's eye that had made out the only means of effective attack against the dirigible. Even as he had ordered the attack, the lad knew that it meant almost certain death, but he had not hesitated. He realized that the French aircraft must be shown some means of destroying these huge air fighters, and knowing that there was time to convey his ideas to the other, had acted at once.

Now, this accomplished, the plane in which Jack and Pierre had performed this success, driven deep into the flaming mass of wreckage, was falling with the broken war balloon down into the sea.

The wreck fell slowly, for the fabric, yet unconsumed, parachuted and held in the air. Then, finally, hissing and splashing, it fell into the sea.

To Jack's ears, as he came again to the surface, came the cries of men wounded and burning. An arm flung toward the sky sent his eyes in that direction, even as he swam.

He saw the two remaining dirigibles fighting together against another aëroplane attack. But the way had been shown, and no longer did the French sheer off when they broke through the Austrian air line. Two small planes crashed into the dirigibles, one into each, and exploded them.

They fell to the sea, burning, men tumbling out upon all sides. A form struck the water close to where Jack, miraculously uninjured, swam. The latter stretched out an arm, and grasped the body by the shoulder, as it reappeared upon the surface. Then a cry of amazement burst from his lips.

The form that he thus clutched so tightly was that of his friend Frank!

CHAPTER XX.

FROM THE DEAD.

At Jack's cry of amazement Frank slowly opened his eyes. His constitution was not nearly as strong as that of his huge friend. He was almost unconscious as the result of his terrible fall. But he recognized his chum in an instant, smiled feebly, and then his muscles relaxed. He lay a dead weight in Jack's arms.

Quickly the lad looked round for some sign of a vessel, or a piece of wreckage to which to cling until he could be picked up. There was none, so still carrying his friend he struck out in the direction of the nearest ship, which could even now be seen approaching.

The sounds of battle still continued, but they gradually grew less as the Austrian fleet, or what was left of it, retired to the protection of its land batteries.

Four warships sent to the bottom of the sea, three submarines missing, and undoubtedly gone forever, and a half score of torpedo boats sunk, was the Austrian loss. The French had lost two battleships, a submarine and three torpedo boats. The heaviest

losses sustained by both sides had been to the air fleets.

Now the approaching vessel drew closer to Jack, and he at length realized that he had been seen. A small boat put off to him. Strong arms gripped him and pulled him and Frank into the boat, and a hearty voice exclaimed in English:

"By Jove! They're English! Now, how do you suppose they got here?"

Jack was conscious of a pleasant sensation at hearing his native tongue spoken thus, but he was too exhausted to take much interest in it then. He fell back unconscious.

But, if the lad was surprised at thus being addressed in English, there was still a greater surprise and joy in store for him—and for Frank.

When Jack reopened his eyes, he lay in a small but well-furnished cabin. Frank lay near him. He already had returned to consciousness, and even now was glancing curiously about.

He glanced at Jack as the latter opened his eyes.

"By George!" he ejaculated. "I was afraid you were done for, you lay there so quietly. How did I come here?"

"Why," said Jack, "you toppled into the sea right beside me, and I grabbed you and held on until we were picked up."

"Then," cried Frank excitedly, "you were aboard the first plane that dived into the dirigible?"

"I was there," replied Jack briefly.

"By Jove! I thought so. It looked like some of your doings. And, if you hadn't thought of that method of attack, the whole French fleet probably would have been sunk!"

"Well, somebody had to do it," said Jack modestly. "I notice you weren't far behind yourself."

"Well," said Frank quietly, "I am glad we accomplished the task successfully. Where are we now?"

"I don't know exactly," replied Jack. "But, as we were picked up, I heard someone talking in English. I believe that we are on an English ship that happened on the scene just in time to get into the battle."

"Well——" began Frank, and stopped suddenly, staring open-mouthed at a figure now framed in the doorway of the little cabin.

Jack turned his eyes in that direction, and also was stricken speechless.

"Am I dreaming?" muttered Frank at last. "It—it can't be."

"But it is," exclaimed a well-known voice, and a dignified and military figure marched into the room—the figure of Lord Hastings, whom the boys had so long mourned as lost.

In spite of their exhausted condition, both boys were upon their feet instantly, and each had him by the hand.

"But you went down with the *Sylph,*" protested Jack.

"You were drowned," declared Frank. "I saw you go down."

"So you did," replied Lord Hastings, laughing a little. "But I came up again. I came up near a piece of floating wreckage, to which I clung for more than twenty-four hours before I was finally picked up by a British torpedo boat."

There were tears in the eyes of both boys as they clung to their old commander.

"But what happened to you?" Lord Hastings continued. "I inquired everywhere, and could find no trace of you. I was certain that you had gone down, and I was never so surprised and overjoyed in my life as when you were lifted aboard the *Sylph* a few hours ago."

"The *Sylph!*" ejaculated Jack.

"Yes," replied His Lordship, smiling a little, "I have christened this vessel the *Sylph II,* but I always speak of her as the *Sylph.* But come, tell me about yourselves."

Briefly Frank related the experiences they had gone through since the *Sylph* had been sunk.

"Nothing you do can surprise me any more," declared Lord Hastings, when Frank had finished his narrative. "But now, as to the future, do you wish to remain aboard the *Marie Theresa,* or would you like to come with me?"

"Would we!" ejaculated Jack fervently.

"I should say we would!" declared Frank decisively.

"Well," said Lord Hastings, "I have no doubt that it can be arranged. I shall speak to Captain Dreyfuss at once."

"Is Lieutenant Hetherington alive?" asked Jack suddenly.

"No," replied Lord Hastings sadly, "we three are the sole survivors of the *Sylph.*"

"But what are you doing in these waters?" demanded Frank.

"Well," replied Lord Hastings, "it's somewhat of a secret, but I don't mind telling you. I am on the trail of the German cruiser *Emden.*"

"The *Emden!*" ejaculated both lads.

"Exactly. She has become a terrible menace to British shipping. While she is probably more than a match for the *Sylph,* if I come up with her I shall stay on her trail until I can raise a cruiser big enough to tackle her. My job is to find her, and, when I do, I guarantee I shall never lose sight of her."

"Good!" cried Jack. "Now, if you can fix it up with Captain Dreyfuss, we are ready to go with you."

"Would you like to accompany me?" asked the commander of the *Sylph.*

The lads signified their assent. An hour later

they were all seated in Captain Dreyfuss' cabin aboard the *Marie Theresa.*

"And where is Pierre?" demanded Captain Dreyfuss of Jack.

"Gone!" replied the lad quietly. "He died the death of a hero."

"And do you mean to tell me," demanded the captain, "that you two lads were in the machines that dived head first into the enemy?"

"It was Jack who conceived the idea and made the first attack," replied Frank.

Captain Dreyfuss turned to Lord Hastings.

"And these are the two lads you are asking me to give up to you, eh?" he said severely.

"Well," replied Lord Hastings, "I certainly should like to have them back again. But, of course, if you do not give your consent——"

Captain Dreyfuss interrupted him with a wave of the hand, and turned to the boys.

"And what do you say, sirs?" he demanded. "Have you not been treated well aboard my ship?"

"Yes, sir," replied Jack, "but——"

Frank's heart fell. From the captain's tone, it was apparent that he did not intend to let them go.

"And you, sir?" demanded the captain of Frank.

"We have no cause to complain," replied Frank. "But Lord Hastings——"

"Enough!" interrupted Captain Dreyfuss. "It shall be as you say." He turned to Lord Hastings.

"Take them," he said, "and I am sure you will never find two braver lads."

"Thank you, sir," said both boys.

The commander of the *Marie Theresa* arose to his feet, signifying that the interview was over, and extended a hand to each lad.

"Good luck," he said simply. "You may go now. I have some matters to discuss with your new commander."

The boys saluted and went on deck, where they awaited Lord Hastings.

It was several hours later before they returned aboard the *Sylph*. No sooner were they aboard, however, than Lord Hastings ordered that the vessel be put under way immediately.

"I have wasted time enough here," he told the lads. "I must get on the trail of the *Emden* at once."

The lads were given quarters corresponding to the ones they had had on the old *Sylph*. The vessel was built along the same lines as the *Sylph I*, and had been fitted out just as luxuriously and comfortably. It was, in times of peace, well adapted for a pleasure yacht.

The *Sylph II* carried a goodly array of fighting material, however, and a crew of 150 men.

It was while dining that night that Lord Hastings gave the boys the surprise of their lives.

"I presume you know," he said quietly, "that, as

the two surviving officers of the *Sylph*, you now move into the vacancies left by the death of my first and second officer?"

"What!" exclaimed both lads in the greatest surprise.

"Oh, you heard me," replied Lord Hastings. "But which of you is to be which?"

"But how about your present officers?" demanded Jack.

"They will understand when I explain to them," replied Lord Hastings. "Now, which is to be my first officer?"

"Jack, sir," said Frank.

"Frank, sir," said Jack.

"Come," said His Lordship, "I have a way to decide."

He took two toothpicks, and broke one off a little shorter than the other. He put them behind his back for a moment, and then held his hand out in front of him.

"Whoever draws the shortest stick," he said, "shall be my first officer. Draw!"

Jack took one of the toothpicks and Frank the other. Then they compared them.

Frank dropped his and slapped Jack heartily on the back.

"Good!" he said joyfully, "you've won."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE "EMDEN"

"THE *Emden,*" said Lord Hastings to Jack and Frank, "has probably done more damage to British, French and Russian shipping than all of the other German raiders and fleets at large."

"Has she accomplished anything lately?" asked Frank.

"Yes," replied Lord Hastings, "she has indeed. I suppose you have not heard the story of her raids?"

"No," replied both lads, and Jack added: "Will you tell us what you know of her?"

"Well," began Lord Hastings, "the *Emden* is commanded by Captain Karl von Mueller, a courteous gentleman and a competent officer—also, by the way, in times of peace, a friend of mine."

"Then you know him well?" asked Frank.

"Very well," returned Lord Hastings. "He has visited me more than once, and I have been his guest in Berlin. But to proceed. The first report of the activity of the *Emden* was received on August 6, when word came that the German cruiser had sunk the steamer *City of Winchester* the day before.

"The *Emden* has contributed to the history of the war one of its most remarkable chapters. For sheer audacity and success it has few parallels. Twenty-two ships, mostly British, have been sunk and one has been captured by this German cruiser, rightly named 'The Terror of the Sea.'

"Since early in August the *Emden* has been at work. Most of this time she has been preying on shipping in the Indian Ocean. The vessels destroyed by Captain von Mueller had a total value of about $4,000,000, exclusive of their cargoes. The *Emden's* largest guns, according to the best figures obtainable, are only 4.1-inch, and of these she has ten. Her speed of 24.5 knots is her greatest asset, but the *Sylph* has the heels of her. She has been able to run down merchant ships with ease and then escape from larger but slower vessels that pursued her. British, Russian, French and Japanese warships in the East have been trying for weeks to put an end to her, but without success."

"But," Frank broke in, "how has she been able to keep to sea month after month without replenishing her coal supply?"

"That," said Lord Hastings, "is a mystery that is as yet unsolved. It is assumed, however, that she has obtained sufficient food and fuel to meet her needs from captured ships. In at least one instance this is known to have been done. The captain of the British steamer *Exford,* captured by the *Emden,*

informed his owners that Captain von Mueller said that before he sank the *Exford* he intended to take on board his cruiser the 7,000 tons of steam coal with which the *Exford* was laden."

"Captain von Mueller must indeed be a capable officer," said Jack.

"He is," said Lord Hastings. "But to continue. After sinking the *City of Winchester* the *Emden* steamed into the Bay of Bengal, five days later, and sent two more British vessels to the bottom. Within three days she had sunk four vessels there. She was accompanied by the *Markommania,* a converted liner, as a collier. The collier was sunk off Sumatra October 16 by a British cruiser.

"Leaving the Bay of Bengal, the *Emden* sank three British steamers in the Indian Ocean on September 14. September 22 she appeared off Madras and shelled the city, and, extinguishing her lights, disappeared when the forts replied. Then she renewed her activity in the vicinity of Rangoon, where more British ships fell to her prey. Where she is now I don't know."

"How large a vessel is she?" asked Jack, greatly interested.

"She has a complement of 361 men," replied Lord Hastings. "Her armament, besides the ten 4.1-inch guns I referred to before, consists of eight five-pounders and four machine guns. She is also understood to be equipped with two submerged

17.7-inch torpedo tubes. She displaces 3,600 tons. She is 387 feet long and has a beam of 43⅓ feet. She was built in 1908. That's about all I can tell you about her."

"And Captain von Mueller," said Frank, "is he an elderly man?"

"No," replied Lord Hastings, "I should hardly call him that. I don't know his age, of course, but he is under forty. I understand that the Germans are hailing him as the modern Nelson and Paul Jones, in memory of two of the greatest sea fighters of all time."

"Well they may," declared Jack, "for he must be a man of exceptional ability. I should like to see him."

"So you may, with good fortune," said Lord Hastings. "It is my hope to see him again before he has done further damage to England."

Lord Hastings' account of the brief history of the *Emden* made quite an impression on Frank and Jack. The brief though active career of probably the greatest of German sea fighters interested them greatly, as it should all young readers.

The boys talked much of the gallant German captain as the *Sylph II* continued on her course from the Adriatic into the sunny Mediterranean once more, through the Suez Canal into the Red Sea, after a stop for coal at Port Said, and on into the warm waters of the Indian Ocean.

And more news of the *Emden* was not to be long forthcoming. Lord Hastings had no means of knowing just in what part of the sea the *Emden* might be, so after two days of fruitless cruising, he put into the port of Penang, on Malacca Straits. Here Lord Hastings received first-hand information concerning the whereabouts of the German "Terror of the Sea."

There were two Russian cruisers, two French destroyers and one British vessel in the harbor, under the guns of the little fort, when the *Sylph* steamed in. These vessels also had been in search of the *Emden,* and had put in for coal.

The commanders of the various ships exchanged visits. The *Emden* was practically the sole topic of their conversation. The Russian commander had just returned aboard his own ship after a visit to Lord Hastings. There came a call from the lookout—on the *Sylph.*

"Cruiser coming into the harbor, sir!"

Lord Hastings, Frank and Jack hurried to the bridge.

"She shows no colors," muttered Frank. "Wonder who she is?"

"Maybe the *Emden* come to pay a little social call," said Jack.

"No," said Lord Hastings; "this cruiser has four smokestacks; the *Emden* has but three."

"They could easily rig up another one," said Jack.

"Lord Hastings, some way I feel that all is not right."

"Nonsense," replied Lord Hastings.

There was the sound of a shot from one of the Russian cruisers.

"She'll show her colors now," said Lord Hastings.

All glanced toward the approaching vessel. A flag was run up the masthead. Lord Hastings made it out immediately.

"Japanese," he said, unconsciously breathing easier.

Slowly the cruiser came closer, heading right for the other ships of war in the harbor. Lord Hastings returned to his cabin and Frank followed him. Jack continued to gaze over the rail at the cruiser. Suddenly, why he never knew, he rushed hurriedly after his commander.

"I am sure that is not a Japanese cruiser, sir," he cried. "I don't know why, but something tells me it is an enemy."

"Nonsense," said Lord Hastings again. "You are a bit nervous. That's all."

"No, sir, it isn't that," replied Jack. "I——"

He was interrupted by the boom of a single big gun followed by a heavy outbreak of cannonading. Lord Hastings jumped to his feet and dashed to the bridge, Jack and Frank close at his heels.

They glanced quickly at the supposed Japanese

cruiser. But the Japanese ensign had been hauled down, and now there floated from the cruiser the flag of Germany! And the cruiser's fourth smoke-stack had come down.

"The *Emden!*" cried Lord Hastings.

Bugles were sounding on all the allied ships of war in the harbor, calling the men to quarters. Caught thus unprepared, the allied vessels were at an immense disadvantage.

Suddenly there was a loud explosion aboard one of the Russian cruisers, and a moment later it burst into flames. Now the other ships poured broadsides into the *Emden,* but she stuck to her post. One of the two French destroyers suddenly dived, head-first, into the sea, one of the *Emden's* submerged torpedoes having dealt her a deathblow.

A shell sped over the stern of the *Sylph,* but did no damage. Then, calmly, almost ignoring the remaining ships of the allied fleet, the *Emden* put about, and made off. Her raid had been successful, and it was another victory for the Kaiser.

The *Emden* continued to rain shells at her foes until she was out of range. Not minded to take any unnecessary risk, Lord Hastings let the *Emden* get well out of range, before he gave the command for the *Sylph* to follow.

Then, stripped for action, the *Sylph* set out upon the trail of the German cruiser.

"We are on the trail at last," said Lord Hastings,

"and on the trail we'll remain until the *Emden* has been sent to the bottom." He turned to Jack. "Hereafter," he said, "I'll place faith in your premonitions."

The *Sylph* kept just far enough in the rear of the *Emden* to be out of range. After three hours, it became apparent that the commander of the German cruiser was aware that he was being followed. He slowed down, waiting the *Sylph* to come within range and give battle.

But while Lord Hastings was a brave man, he had no idea of accepting battle now. For had the day gone against him, the *Emden* would have been able to disappear once more. With the superior speed of the *Sylph,* Lord Hastings knew that he could remain on the trail, using his wireless to pick up some British vessel big enough to put an end to the "Terror of the Sea."

Accordingly, the *Sylph* also slowed down. After waiting in vain for the little scout cruiser to approach closer, the *Emden* again set out on her course, at full speed. The *Sylph* also quickened her pace, and the *Emden* was unable to shake her off.

Then the *Emden* slowed down again. So did the *Sylph.* The wireless operator approached Lord Hastings with a message.

Lord Hastings read it aloud:

"Remain where you are till I come up, or I shall sink you. Signed, von Mueller."

Followed by the two lads Lord Hastings made his way to the wireless room, and ticked off this message himself:

"The *Emden* is doomed. Signed, Hastings."

CHAPTER XXII.

ON THE TRAIL.

A REPLY to this message was not long coming. It read:

"Lord Hastings: Sorry you are aboard, but I must sink you."

To this Lord Hastings replied:

"It can't be done."

Now the *Emden* put about and headed for the *Sylph*. Quickly also the *Sylph* came about and headed westward.

"If he'll only follow long enough, we'll lure him into the path of some British vessel," said Lord Hastings.

"Well," said Jack, "I don't believe he will. As soon as he finds he cannot overtake us, he'll continue on his way."

"And he'll try to lose us in the night," said Frank.

"That is my idea," said Lord Hastings. "To prevent that we must be on the alert continually. We'll follow him for months, if necessary. At nights we shall have to close up a bit, and take a chance that they cannot hit us."

It was nearing dusk when the *Emden* finally gave

up the chase of the *Sylph* as futile, and once more put about. Immediately also the *Sylph's* head came about, and she once more set out to trail the German. Occasional messages were exchanged between Captain von Mueller and Lord Hastings.

Night fell, and now the *Sylph* began to draw closer to her quarry. She closed up the distance gradually, until Lord Hastings decided that they were near enough; and this position the *Sylph* maintained, her searchlight playing upon the *Emden* and making her as light as day.

All night and all the following day the *Sylph* followed the *Emden*. Several times the *Emden* put about, and made as if to give chase, but on each occasion the *Sylph* also changed her course. The relative positions of the two vessels remained the same, except that in the light of day the *Sylph* put more distance between her and her quarry.

Night drew on once more, and again the *Sylph* approached closer. It was plain that this remorseless pursuit was worrying the commander of the *Emden* and that he did not know which way to turn to avoid his pursuer.

Lord Hastings sniffed the air.

"Feels like there would be a fog to-night," he said. "I hope it is not so dense as to dim the glow of the searchlight."

But in this he was doomed to disappointment. The fog descended, but still those on the *Sylph*

could dimly make out the outline of the *Emden.* But with the approach of morning, while Jack had the bridge, the fog suddenly thickened, and blotted out the pursued vessel entirely.

Quickly Jack summoned Lord Hastings.

Immediately Lord Hastings ordered the searchlight extinguished and all lights on board put out.

"We don't want to let him know where we are," he said. "I feel absolutely certain that Captain von Mueller will double back and try to come up with us in the fog. We must avoid that at all hazards, and at the same time must so maneuver as to be near enough to pick him up when the fog lifts."

Lord Hastings altered the course of the *Sylph* slightly, but continued to go forward. Six o'clock came and no sign of the *Emden,* and then seven. And then the fog lifted as suddenly as it had descended, and at that moment there was the sound of a big gun and a shell whistled over the stern of the *Sylph.*

A mile in the offing, having put about, was the *Emden.* She had maneuvered even as Lord Hastings had figured, and had run clear by the *Sylph* in the darkness.

"Full speed ahead!" commanded Lord Hastings.

The *Sylph* leaped quickly forward, as the bell tinkled the signal to the engine-room, running rap-

idly to get out of range of the *Emden's* guns and torpedoes.

Several times, without reducing the speed of his ship, Lord Hastings swerved in his course, and thus spoiled the aim of the German gunners. And then the *Emden's* shells began to fall short. The *Sylph* was out of range.

For an hour the *Emden* continued her pursuit, and then once more put about and herself became the pursued, the *Sylph* following relentlessly on her heels.

It was near noon when the wireless operator aboard the *Sylph* approached Lord Hastings.

"Have just picked up the Australian cruiser *Sydney,* sir. I gave him our identity and Captain Glossop pays his respects to you, sir."

Lord Hastings jumped to action in a moment.

"Where is he now?"

The operator gave the position of the *Sydney.*

"A hundred miles away," mused Lord Hastings.

He led the way to the wireless room.

"Send this in code," he told the operator, handing him a slip of paper on which he had written a few words, "and instruct him to reply in code."

The operator did as he was commanded.

The reply was plain to Lord Hastings, himself an operator upon occasion.

"Good!" he said to himself.

He turned to the boys.

"I gave the *Sydney* our position and told him we were trailing the *Emden*. He replied that he would head for us immediately; for us to keep up the chase and keep him constantly informed of our position."

"But don't you suppose the *Emden* has picked up the message, sir?"

"Undoubtedly; that is why I sent it in code. Von Mueller may surmise what we are up to, but he cannot be sure."

That the commander of the *Emden* had picked up the message became apparent a few moments later.

"*Emden* has signaled the *Sydney* her presence not needed, sir," said the operator, "and signed the message Hastings."

Lord Hastings scribbled rapidly.

"Send this," he ordered.

The message read:

"Disregard all communications not in code. *Emden* trying to throw you off the track."

The *Sydney* acknowledged the receipt of this message, and Lord Hastings and the two lads returned to the bridge.

"What do you suppose Captain von Mueller will do now?" asked Jack.

"Run as long as he can," replied Lord Hastings.

"However, the *Sydney* is considerably faster, so it is only a question of time till we get him."

The *Emden* now headed east, on a course that eventually would land her, if she maintained it, somewhere along the Malay archipelago. The *Sylph* gave chase.

Continual messages were flashed between Lord Hastings and the commander of the Australian cruiser, and it became apparent that the latter was gradually overhauling them.

Came a message to Lord Hastings from the commander of the *Emden:*

"Sorry you were afraid to fight it out."

Lord Hastings wired back:

"I wasn't afraid, but I will take no chance of losing you."

All day and all another night the chase continued; and it was near noon of the following day that the lookout gave the welcome cry:

"Ship off the stern, sir!"

Quickly all eyes were turned in the direction indicated. A smudge of smoke could be seen off the horizon. Came a message from the *Sydney:*

"Have sighted you."

But the *Sydney* was still far in the rear when land came in sight.

"What do you make it, sir?" asked Frank of Lord Hastings.

"I should say it is one of the Cocos Islands group," was the reply.

The *Emden* headed straight for it. Two hours later she landed, and the *Sylph* stood off.

"Do you suppose Captain von Mueller will desert the ship or sink her?" asked Jack.

"Not without a fight," replied Lord Hastings positively.

It was three hours later before the *Emden* lifted anchor and put to sea again. Those on board did not know it then, but a landing party from the *Emden* had destroyed the wireless station on the island while there.

Slowly but surely the *Sydney* overhauled the *Sylph,* and at length drew up on even terms with her. Then she forged slowly ahead, drawing closer and closer to her prey.

Now, realizing that escape was impossible, the *Emden* turned. Brought to bay, Captain von Mueller had decided to give battle.

"Will we go into action, sir?" asked Jack of Lord Hastings eagerly.

"Not unless it is absolutely necessary," replied the commander of the *Sylph.* "The *Sydney* can handle the *Emden* alone."

Both lads were disappointed, for they had felt certain that when the *Emden* was brought to bay they would have a hand in putting an end to her.

"Well," said Jack, "we can at least see the battle."

"Right," said Frank, and fortifying themselves with glasses, they took posts of vantage.

Now the *Emden* steamed forward to meet the *Sydney,* and the *Sylph* hove to. The crew, relieved from duty, scattered about the decks, seeking advantageous places to witness the encounter.

Slowly the two cruisers approached each other. The *Emden* already has been described, and a few words here concerning the *Sydney* will not be amiss.

The Australian cruiser *Sydney* carried a main battery of eight 6-inch guns, thus giving her an advantage over the German ship. She had a complement of 400 men. She was 400 feet long and was much greater in the beam than her antagonist. She carried several smaller guns and a number of rapid-firers. As did the *Emden,* the *Sydney* carried two submerged torpedoes.

Across the water came the call of a bugle, as the crew of the *Sydney* made ready for action. She was almost within range now. There was no question but that she outranged the *Emden* slightly, but the German cruiser was steaming rapidly forward to overcome this disadvantage as quickly as possible.

Now there was a puff of smoke from the bow of the *Sydney*. "Boom!" came the sound of a big gun.

The *Sydney*, within range at last, had opened the battle.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BATTLE.

"Now for it!" cried Jack, as the first shell from the British cruiser splashed up the water only a few yards in front of the *Emden.*

A second concussion was heard and an English shell struck the heavy armored side of the German cruiser.

The sailors and officers raised a loud cheer. It was first blood for the *Sydney,* and the sailors aboard that vessel also let out a yell of delight.

So far the *Emden* had not answered the *Sydney's* fire. However, she was dashing rapidly ahead, seeking to get within range. Two more shells from the *Sydney* struck the *Emden* before she finally managed to get within range, and opened fire with the 4.1-inch guns in her forward turrets.

The results of the first salvos from the German guns were nil. The range finders on the *Emden* had evidently not calculated properly. The water leaped into white sprays ahead of the *Sydney,* indicating that the *Emden's* first fire had been wasted.

But the next attempt of the *Emden* met with better success. A solid shot struck the *Sydney*

squarely on the bow. The *Sydney's* armor was too strong for the German guns at this distance, however, and while the vessel staggered slightly, she was not damaged to any extent.

It became apparent early in the battle that the marksmanship of the *Sydney's* gunners was much superior to that of the foe. The range-finders were attending to their work with coolness and precision. The fire was deliberate and accurate. It was slower than that of the *Emden,* but far more deadly.

A shell struck upon the *Emden's* deck near the forward smokestack and burst. Iron and steel flew high in the air and came down in a deadly hail, killing and maiming many members of the crew. The smokestack toppled to the deck, pinioning many more beneath it.

Quickly a squad of men sprang forward and soon cleared away the wreckage. But the carrying away of the smokestack now hampered the draught of the *Emden* and made progress much more difficult. Nevertheless, she still continued to pour her shells against the armored sides of the *Sydney.*

Now the first shot landed among the gun crew of the *Sydney,* putting one of the guns out of commission, killing three of the crew and wounding several others. Those three men were the only ones killed on the *Sydney* in the whole course of the battle.

Suddenly those aboard the *Sylph* became aware that the fire of the enemy was not as rapid as before. The reason for this they soon made out. One of the forward guns of the *Emden* had been silenced by the well-directed fire of the *Sydney*.

A moment later another of the enemy's guns became silent—and then another. Up to this moment the *Emden* had been rushing as rapidly as possible toward the *Sydney,* but now she paused in her advance, almost stopped, swung about in a wide circle, and made off in the other direction.

It was plain that she had had enough. A cheer went up from the British sailors, both on the *Sydney* and aboard the *Sylph*. But Captain Glossop, of the *Sydney,* had no mind to let his prey escape. The *Sydney* dashed in pursuit of the enemy at full speed, and a fierce running battle ensued.

The *Emden's* stern guns continued to play upon the *Sydney* as she made a wild dash for the distant shore. She was headed for the nearest point of land, and the question that now rose in the minds of the spectators aboard the *Sylph* was whether the *Sydney* could come up with her before she could find a certain amount of refuge in what appeared to be a small cove.

The excitement aboard the *Sylph* was intense. Men shouted and yelled, calling words of encouragement and advice to the fellow sailors aboard the

British battle cruiser, forgetting their voices could not be heard.

As the *Emden* turned and made off, Jack cried out:

"She's running! She's liable to get away!"

"Don't you believe it!" called Frank excitedly. "The *Sydney*'ll catch 'em!"

"What's the *Emden* heading that way for?" asked Jack of Lord Hastings, who stood beside the lads.

"My idea is," replied the commander of the *Sylph,* "that von Mueller intends to beach the ship."

"In that event will he and his men try to escape inland?"

"I suppose so."

The *Sydney* continued her chase, seeming to gather additional speed at every furlong. Her heavy shells played a merry tattoo upon the stern and deck of the fleeing German cruiser.

But the *Emden* was now gradually drawing toward land. Suddenly, she swerved and headed straight for a huge reef that could be seen protruding above the surface of the water. A cry of dismay went up from those aboard the *Sylph.*

But the cry was uncalled for. For even as the *Emden* swerved in her course, a British shell burst squarely upon the bridge of the German cruiser.

At the same instant a second found its way through the various compartments to the engine-room.

There was the sound of terrific explosion, and a red sheet of flame sprang above the cruiser. Even above the cries of battle came the cries of German sailors, maimed and suffering horribly.

Another salvo from the *Sydney* put the steering apparatus of the *Emden* out of commission, and now instead of steering straight for the rocky reef, she turned her broadside toward it.

Swiftly she floated toward this dangerous projection. Almost helpless as she was, Captain von Mueller evidently had no thought of surrender. The three guns still in commission aboard the vessel continued to hurl their messages of defiance at the *Sydney*.

Suddenly rapid movements of those aboard the *Emden* told that one of the submerged torpedoes, still undamaged, was about to be launched. Quickly the *Sydney* maneuvered a trifle to the left, and the huge explosive sped on to the sea beyond, doing no damage. Now the second torpedo was launched, but it had no better success.

Now the *Sydney* made use of her own torpedo tube, and a moment later this engine of destruction sped through the water toward the *Emden*. There was no need for a second. A terrible explosion told that the torpedo had found its mark.

High above the burning cruiser a second sheet of

flame flared up, and at almost the same instant the *Emden* beached. There was a loud crunching sound as the cruiser grounded on the rocky reef and was battered by the heavy waves against the uneven projections.

To launch the small boats in this place and make for the shore was impossible. The boats were launched, and the crew tumbled in. One made off toward the shore, but it could not live in the fierce breakers, and in a moment disappeared.

The other boats, warned by the fate of the first, put off toward the open sea.

"Do you suppose Captain von Mueller will remain and perish with his ship?" asked Frank of Lord Hastings.

"I do not believe so," was the reply. "There is no need for it. If the ship were sinking, it would be another matter, but as you see, it is not. It appears to be caught hard and fast on a ledge, and is burning up."

It was true. Stuck suddenly fast on a rocky ledge, the *Emden* was almost stationary. Flames continued to leap on all sides of her, and it was plainly apparent that it would not be long before they would reach her magazine; and when they did reach it, that would be the end.

As the German small boats headed seaward, the *Sydney* ceased firing at the now helpless vessel, and

bore down on them. It was plain that Captain Glossop was bent upon capturing the survivors.

Small boats and the Australian cruiser were now probably a mile from the burning vessel, and the *Sylph* had started forward also to pick up some of the German sailors.

At this moment the flames reached the magazine of the *Emden.* There was a blinding flash, a terrific detonation. The *Emden* sprang from the sea like a thing alive, seemed to hang in the air for a brief moment, then turned and dived head-first into the sea. The waters closed over her with an angry hiss, and the German cruiser *Emden,* for months a terrible menace to British, French and Russian shipping, "The Terror of the Sea," was no more.

"A fitting end for so noble a vessel," was Lord Hastings' only comment as the cruiser disappeared from the world's ken.

The *Sylph* was nearing the little flotilla of small boats, and several were put off from the vessel to join the small craft of the *Sydney* and take the surviving Germans prisoners.

Frank and Jack were in the first boat. As they drew closer, Jack made out a uniformed figure in one of the German boats that he felt sure was the commander of the *Emden.*

He steered his boat closer. It was plain that there would be no further resistance from the Ger-

mans, and Jack finally managed to steer his boat alongside that of Captain von Mueller.

The latter made no protest when Jack ordered him to step aboard the *Sylph's* small boat, and did so without a word. Immediately, the little craft turned about and put back to the *Sylph,* leaving the other small craft to attend to the rest of the German survivors.

Of the *Emden's* crew of 361 officers and men, there were less than 75 left alive. Dead and wounded alike had gone to a deep-sea grave when the German cruiser took her death plunge.

Lord Hastings stood at the rail of the *Sylph* as the little boat drew alongside.

Jack and Frank clambered over the side of the ship ahead of the German commander and, with Lord Hastings, stood waiting to receive him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CAPTAIN VON MUELLER.

As Captain von Mueller clambered over the rail, Lord Hastings advanced to meet him with outstretched hand.

"It is indeed a pleasure to receive you aboard the *Sylph!*" he exclaimed, with real pleasure in his voice.

Captain von Mueller grasped the outstretched hand and wrung it heartily.

"And I am glad to see you," he returned quietly, "though I would rather it were under more fortunate circumstances. But the battle is over and, with your permission, we will not refer to it again."

"Agreed," replied Lord Hastings, and led the way to his cabin, motioning for Captain von Mueller, Frank and Jack to follow.

He introduced the lads to the great German commander, and the latter expressed his pleasure at seeing them. At this moment the third officer entered and spoke to Lord Hastings.

"Launch from the *Sydney* coming alongside, sir," he said.

"Show Captain Glossop here when he comes aboard," he said.

The third officer withdrew. He appeared again a moment later, however, followed by the commander of the *Sydney*. Introductions followed.

"Captain von Mueller," said Lord Hastings at length, "it will be necessary for me to turn you over to Captain Glossop. You will go with him aboard the *Sydney*. Were I returning direct to England, it would give me pleasure to have you accompany me. However, the *Sydney* will go straight back to Melbourne, and you will be taken there and held as a prisoner of war."

Captain von Mueller signified his understanding of the situation. He expressed pleasure at having met Lord Hastings again, and that the fortunes of war had made him the prisoner of such gallant Englishmen.

After some further talk, Captain von Mueller and Captain Glossop disappeared over the side of the *Sylph,* and put off toward the *Sydney*. Before either vessel proceeded on its way, several further messages were exchanged between the commanders of the *Sydney* and the *Sylph;* but at length the *Sydney* began to draw away toward the east.

"And so," said Lord Hastings to the two lads, as they stood leaning over the rail, after the *Sylph* was once more under way, "so goes the 'German Terror of the Sea.'"

The *Sylph* now turned her head once more to the west, and started on her journey back toward the Mediterranean. She steamed along slowly, Lord Hastings, greatly satisfied with the success of his mission, being in no particular hurry. They put in at Ceylon for coal; then once more resumed their journey.

It was the second day after leaving Ceylon that the lookout made a startling discovery.

"Submarine off the starboard bow, sir!" he called.

Instantly there was excitement on board the *Sylph,* for there was no telling whether the submarine were friend or foe. At length those on the bridge were able to make out the periscope of the vessel, close to the water. And at this very moment it stood higher and higher in the water. The submarine was coming to the surface.

The *Sylph* had been quickly stripped for action, for Lord Hastings had determined to give battle should the submarine prove to be an enemy. All available guns were turned upon the spot where the submarine was rising.

But hardly had the under-sea craft come to the surface than a British ensign was run up.

Lord Hastings breathed easier.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "I wouldn't care much to encounter a submarine."

The commander of the submarine, Captain Nich-

olson, came aboard the *Sylph* to pay his respects to Lord Hastings.

"I suppose you are aware," he said during the course of the conversation, "that Turkey has declared war on England, France and Russia?"

"What!" cried Lord Hastings. "Turkey has declared war! I hadn't heard of it."

"Well, it's true, nevertheless," replied Captain Nicholson.

Lord Hastings smiled grimly.

"I guess it will be 'The Sick Man of Europe's' last illness," he said pointedly.

Captain Nicholson laughed.

"It will," he said briefly.

"But what are you doing in these waters?" asked Lord Hastings, having already explained his own presence there.

"Well," said Captain Nicholson, "I understand that there are at least three Turkish cruisers anchored in the mouth of the Euphrates, in the Persian gulf. I suppose they are there to protect Bassora, about 70 miles up the river, from possible attacks. I had thought of attempting to sink them."

"What! Alone?" said Lord Hastings.

The captain of the submarine shrugged his shoulders.

"Why not?" he wanted to know.

"Well," said Lord Hastings, "it's a desperate

venture, but if you are successful, it will be a feather in your cap."

"I'm not looking for glory," replied Captain Nicholson. "But I would give my right arm to destroy those Turkish cruisers, guarded as they are by a fort. And I mean to have a try at it."

"I'd like to go with you," said Lord Hastings, "but the *Sylph* would be worse than useless in such an encounter."

"True," said Captain Nicholson. "But I have an idea. Have you ever been aboard a submarine in action?"

"I have been aboard many submarines, yes," replied Lord Hastings, "but one in action, no."

"Then why not come with me?"

"I would like to," said Lord Hastings, "but what of the *Sylph?*"

"Your first officer could take command until you returned."

"No," said Lord Hastings, "it can't be done." He was struck with a sudden idea, and turned to Jack and Frank. "How would you two lads like to make such an excursion?" he asked.

"We would like nothing better, sir," replied Frank.

"Indeed, we would like it immensely," agreed Jack.

Lord Hastings turned again to Captain Nicholson.

"Why not take these two lads as substitutes for me?" he asked.

The commander of the submarine looked somewhat dubious.

"Oh, I'll guarantee they won't be in the way," said Lord Hastings with a laugh, and he proceeded to relate to the astounded commander some of the things the lads had already accomplished.

Captain Nicholson arose, and took each lad by the hand.

"I shall account it an honor to have you with me," he said quietly.

"So be it, then," said Lord Hastings. "I shall remain here with the *Sylph* until you return."

Both lads thanked Lord Hastings heartily for giving them this opportunity of seeing something of under-the-sea fighting aboard a British vessel.

"How soon do you plan to start?" Lord Hastings inquired of Captain Nicholson.

"Immediately," replied the commander of the submarine Y-3.

"And how long do you figure it will be before you can return here?"

"Not more than thirty-six hours."

Lord Hastings turned to the two lads.

"You had better take a few clothes with you," he told them. "Do you prepare now, while I have a few words with Captain Nicholson."

The lads hastened to their own quarters, and rapidly threw a few belongings together, so anxious were they to be off.

"Lord Hastings is a brick!" exclaimed Jack.

"I should say he is!" agreed Frank. "He agrees to wait in this outlandish spot two days just to give us this opportunity. How many other commanders do you suppose there are who would go to all that trouble?"

"Not many," replied Jack dryly.

"I guess not. Are you ready?"

"Yes."

"Come on then, let's go back to Lord Hastings' cabin."

Captain Nicholson was already on his feet, ready to go, when the lads reëntered the commander's cabin.

"I see it didn't take you long," he observed.

"We are very anxious to go, sir," Jack explained.

"They are always quick and prompt," said Lord Hastings.

"An excellent trait," commended Captain Nicholson.

Lord Hastings accompanied Captain Nicholson and the two lads to the rail.

"All you two lads have to do," he said, "is to look on. You are not supposed to do any fighting. Just keep out of everybody's way and make no trouble. Also, keep out of mischief."

"Very well, sir," replied Jack.

The three clambered over the rail and dropped into the little boat that was rising and falling gently with the swell of the waves on the sea below.

Quickly the launch put off toward the submarine.

Lord Hastings raised his voice and shouted after them.

"I'll wait here until you return. Don't be gone any longer than you can help."

"We'll be back within the time I mentioned," Captain Nicholson called back.

Lord Hastings signified that he was satisfied, and waved his hand to the departing boat.

Jack and Frank waved in return.

CHAPTER XXV.

UNDER THE SEA AGAIN.

"I HAVE not yet told the men what I propose to do," Captain Nicholson informed the boys, as they made their way aboard the Y-3.

Captain Nicholson introduced the lads to the man at the helm.

"Old Jansen," he said with a flourish of his arm.

The boys acknowledged this introduction, and Old Jansen touched his cap.

"Jansen," said the commander, "we are going to attack the Turkish battleships at the mouth of the Euphrates."

The old man let out a siren-like yell, and turned crimson all over his pink and white face.

Captain Nicholson turned the submarine over to him, and, followed by the two lads, made his way below.

"I never knew eighteen throats could make so much noise," said Frank to Jack, after the crew had been informed of their project.

And it was indeed a terrific noise the men made when they learned they were about to go into action.

"The 'subs' aren't like the big ships," Captain

Nicholson explained. "With such a small crew I know the men personally, and I know I can count on each and every one of them, particularly Old Jansen, and Brown, the gunner's mate. I need not caution the engine-room crew for special watchfulness. Every oiler aft knows a warm bearing would condemn him forever in the eyes of his shipmates."

A few moments more and the submarine was racing along toward the mouth of the Euphrates, where the enemy was known to be. Just as dusk was setting in, Brown, the gunner's mate, reported an aëroplane to leeward. Captain Nicholson, Jack and Frank, who stood on the bridge, could just make it out with binoculars.

"I hate to use any electricity out of my batteries now," said Captain Nicholson, "for it is likely to be very precious later. However, I don't want to run chances of being discovered. We'll dive."

The three made their way below. The entrance was hermetically closed, and soon the tanks were being filled. A moment later the Y-3 began to submerge.

At a depth of 60 feet Captain Nicholson trimmed down, and for an hour the vessel ran along at eight knots, the commander wishing to make sure of complete darkness before coming up.

"How do you manage to keep your course under water, captain?" asked Frank.

"Simple," was the reply. "Gyroscopic compass."

At that moment the man on watch at the bell receiver reported the sound of a ship's propellers above. Captain Nicholson turned his place at the periscope over to his first officer and listened himself.

The steady rhythmic beat was well off the port bow.

At Captain Nicholson's command, the main ballast tank was emptied until the conning tower was well awash. Then the commander, Frank and Jack went up to have a look around, for the airship as well as for the vessel.

"Those sky pilots," said the commander, "maintain that they can see us and get us with bombs at any depth. However, I see nothing of our friend. Looks like he had lost his bet this time."

They returned below, and Frank put his eye to the periscope.

Almost instantly he made out the outline of a large vessel of some kind. He reported this to Captain Nicholson, who brushed him quickly aside and peered into the periscope himself.

"Merchant vessel of some kind," he said aloud. "We haven't time to fool with him now. May be able to get him as we come back."

Once more now the three made their way to the bridge. The clouds had gradually thickened and it was very dark.

"I wish it would rain," mused Captain Nicholson,

"or that we would at least have a dull sunrise, for it will be better suited for our work. Brown says he's sure we'll be favored with suitable weather because of the righteousness of our cause; but I am pinning my faith to the barometer, which has already fallen two points."

"Well, I hope everything goes all right," said Jack.

"It will," said the commander grimly. "You can bank on that, son. Might as well give the men a little rest," he added.

He poked his head down and called out:

"Turn in and pipe down!"

Then the commander and the two lads stood watch on the bridge.

At 2 o'clock, according to the captain's reckoning, the submarine was well off the mouth of the Euphrates.

"Can we find our way in by the navigation lights?" asked Frank.

"Not much," replied Captain Nicholson. "We'll stand off and on near where I place the shore line till we have daylight enough to see what we are about. Anyhow, I don't suppose there will be any lights, or if there are, they will likely be misplaced, to lure somebody to death."

Now the commander went below and bent over the charts for perhaps the hundredth time.

"About two miles off yet!" he muttered.

The chart gave the bottom on the sandbar in front of the entrance as shell and hard sand.

"Lucky," Captain Nicholson told the boys when he returned to the bridge. "This will allow us to run with very little under our keel in no fear of rocks."

"Is it very deep along here?" asked Jack.

"No," replied the commander. "That's what worries me. The chart shows a bare six and a half fathoms over the bar, continuing slightly deeper until it sheers off into the deep basin that is the inner harbor."

"And how much water does the Y-3 draw?" asked Frank.

"From the top of her periscope to the bottom of her keel," replied Captain Nicholson, "the Y-3 displaces exactly 20 feet. It will be ticklish work to navigate in those six and a half fathoms (39 feet) without being drawn down by suction and striking bottom so hard as to rebound up to the surface, where the Turks are sure to see us."

At 4:30 o'clock in the morning there was light enough to make out the small gray fort guarding the entrance to the Euphrates. The submarine did not lie more than a mile away.

"It's up to us to get out of sight before the fort watchers see us," said Captain Nicholson.

Being satisfied of how far his run should be and verifying his course by the compass while still on

the surface, Captain Nicholson quickly ordered the vessel trimmed down to a depth of 60 feet, and then started forward at about four knots—as low speed as was consistent with good handling.

"Lucky it's high tide; just beginning to ebb," said Captain Nicholson. "We'll find all the water on the bar that is ever there."

There was to be no more sleep now on the Y-3. From the gunner's mate down every man of the crew was on the *qui vive*.

As the submarine neared where the bar was charted, it came up till the pressure gauge showed only ten feet of water above.

"Ten feet to hide us from the forts' lookouts and guns," explained Captain Nicholson.

Suddenly there was a jar that stirred all on board off their feet. There was a sensation of sinking. As previously instructed, the diving rudder man immediately gave the submarine up-rudder. Captain Nicholson ordered full speed ahead, although he knew it would mean that the vessel's periscope would show, giving the enemy a good look at the vessel.

"If we hadn't come up," said Captain Nicholson, "we would have been sucked down solidly into the sand, and good-by to our chances at those men-o'-war inside."

He was silent a moment and then added: "This

is what I call tough luck. We shall have to porpoise."

In a second the submarine was again down in the deep basin beyond the bar. The vessel hadn't been up long enough for the commander even to get a look around.

"Here's where we get busy," said Captain Nicholson. "It's up to us to rush the work along before the men in the fort, who must have seen us, can take measures against us."

The submarine ran along at a speed of ten knots at a depth of forty feet and in almost no time at all had covered the mile from the entrance to where the men-of-war lay.

"Now's the time," said Commander Nicholson.

Quickly the torpedoes, 18-inch superheaters, were placed in the tubes. It only remained to arise, sight the enemy and fire.

Quickly the little vessel rose, until her periscope gave the commander a view of the first Turkish cruiser. The commander gave the word for a quick rise and the submersion, and took a firm grip on the periscope.

Through the spray that broke, the keen eyes of the commander made out the form of his first target. There, on the port side of the submarine, was a large Turkish cruiser, stern to.

Midstream, to starboard, lay a light cruiser of the

first class, and 800 yards up the basin, between the two, a small armored cruiser.

The flat country was thickly veiled with mist and a drizzling rain. A choppy sea added to the chances of making the first attack on the Turks unobserved.

Captain Nicholson steered a course straight to the starboard side of the first Turkish cruiser, to launch the torpedo just forward of amidships at a distance of about 300 yards.

The lookout on the cruiser had not picked up the submarine. Captain Nicholson saw an officer at the stern, sighting the fort with his glass. The Y-3 crept on unnoticed.

Suddenly a seaman on the forecastle of the cruiser made out the periscope of the submarine, waved his cap frantically and ran toward an officer.

All this, as it progressed, Captain Nicholson repeated to the lads, who stood just behind him.

Jack glanced at the range scale. It read 349 yards.

The cross wires of the periscope were on her middle funnel. Captain Nicholson jerked the firing valve for No. 1 torpedo. There was a hiss of air and a rush of water.

The first torpedo had been launched!

CHAPTER XXVI.

A SUCCESSFUL RAID.

WITHOUT pausing to learn the effect of the first shot, Captain Nicholson sent the submarine below with a lurch, ordered the helm hard a-starboard and made for mid-channel, where he knew the second first-class cruiser lay at anchor, stern to and nosing the strong ebb-tide.

All members of the crew, as well as Frank and Jack, were jubilant. The men insisted that they had heard a roar that meant the explosion of the cruiser, though this was highly improbable. Jack and Frank had heard nothing, and they turned to Captain Nicholson.

"Did you hit her, sir?" asked Jack eagerly.

"Sure," was the reply. "The shot couldn't have failed to go home."

But the work was only one-third done, even less than that, when the fact that the submarine had to get out of the harbor again is considered.

The submarine, well down, now ran across the harbor at an angle, aiming to come up to the starboard of the second cruiser. Captain Nicholson explained his reason for doing this:

"I figure they will expect us on the side nearest the first cruiser," he said. "Therefore, I believe we stand a fair chance of surprising them by attacking on the starboard. At the same time, we will have our movements masked from the third and smaller cruiser by our second victim itself."

This sounded reasonable to the two lads, but they made no comment.

To foster an appearance of an attack off the second cruiser's port side, Captain Nicholson let go a decoy periscope to float with the tide's decided sweep to the left shore and draw the fire of the enemy in that direction.

Slowly the submarine advanced, and presently those on board could hear the unmistakable boom of heavy guns. The ruse had succeeded, and the cruisers and guns of the fort were aiming at the spot in the water where the decoy periscope led them to believe the submarine was floating.

The submarine rose so that the periscope took in the scene above the water. Captain Nicholson, glancing through the instrument, saw that he was at least 500 yards to the starboard of the second cruiser. Under full speed, the Y-3 ran straight up to her enemy's bow.

The periscope, protruding above the water, was quickly sighted by the cruiser, but before the vessel's guns could be brought to bear, Captain Nichol-

son released the second torpedo. Immediately the Y-3 dived again.

But before the submarine had entirely disappeared under the water, there came a loud roaring boom. The second torpedo had gone home.

"Magazine must have gone too," said Captain Nicholson briefly.

Frank and Jack glanced curiously at the members of the crew. Not at all nervous themselves, they were nevertheless surprised at the apparent coolness of the British sailors.

Captain Nicholson noticed the expression on their faces, and took time to remark:

"I suppose we should all be thinking with pity of the dead and dying above us, but when you're a hundred feet or so below, the shots and cries of battle are neither exciting nor grewsome."

The gallant commander was now steering a course for the third of the Turkish cruisers.

"Guess I won't go so close this time," he remarked. "I'll fire at longer range, so we won't have so far to go among the wreckage of all three when we leave."

Ten minutes later the submarine came within the desired range, unobserved by the cruiser, which was lowering her boats to go to the help of the others. Captain Nicholson stood with his hand on the toggle of the firing valve, reading the range scale.

Suddenly there was a terrific shock. Every man

on board the submarine was knocked off his feet, and the submarine went rapidly to the bottom. Jack was knocked unconscious by the suddenness and force of the shock.

When he opened his eyes again, Frank was bending over him.

"What's the matter?" he gasped.

"Shot hit us, I guess," was Frank's calm reply.

The lad was right. Two small Turkish gunboats, whose presence in the harbor was not known to Captain Nicholson, had approached the scene of battle, and making out the submarine's periscope, had opened on her with the big guns. One shot had gone true, and it was this that had sent the Y-3 careening to the bottom.

"Are we going to sink?" asked Jack.

"We've already sunk," replied Frank. "Whether we'll get to the surface again or not I don't know."

The lads heard the hiss of air through the vent in the manifold. Brown was letting water into the ballast tank to keep the submarine down. He turned as Captain Nicholson walked over to him.

"They got our periscopes, I think," he said coolly. "But our torpedo went just the same!"

Sure enough the tube was empty. The force of the shock had caused Captain Nicholson to launch the torpedo before he was ready, and there was no knowing whether it had been aimed true or not.

The commander now took account of the casual-

ties. One of the men had an ugly gash across his forehead from being thrown against a stanchion, another had a bleeding and probably broken nose. Brown applied first aid to the injured, while Captain Nicholson got the submarine under way again and headed for the mouth of the harbor.

"I wonder if that last torpedo went home," said Frank. "Do you suppose it did, captain?"

"I don't know," was the reply. "We are blind now, our periscope having been shot away, and there is no way of telling without going to the surface and exposing ourselves to gunfire."

"Is there any danger of our being sunk?" asked Jack.

"Danger!" he repeated. "You bet there's danger. Still, thanks to a tight hull and a true compass, we have a fighting chance."

The Y-3 was now making ten knots, for, as Captain Nicholson said, "there was no use wasting time and giving the enemy time to plant a barrier."

Still five hundred yards from the sandbar which must be crossed, there was a jar, a moaning, grinding sound, and the motors went instantly dead. From the battery compartment there was a rush of water into the living quarters.

It was but the work of a moment for the crew to "dog down" the doors of that compartment to segregate the damage and prevent the flooding of

other compartments. But even then, the Y-3 was in a bad way, and all on board realized it.

"I guess we are gone this time," said Frank quietly to Jack.

"Looks like it," was Jack's cool reply. "However, while there is life there is hope."

Captain Nicholson noticed the look of anxiety on the lads' faces.

"Don't you worry," he said cheerily. "We'll get out of here yet."

But now the deadliest foe of the submarine was at work—chlorine gas. The action of the salt water on the sulphuric acid of the battery cells was generating it with fatal quickness. Already the boys could feel a deadly burning sensation in their throats and noses.

Fifteen minutes of that atmosphere would have left all on board the submarine gasping and stifling sixty feet below the fresh air that meant life. There was but one thing to do—come to the surface and run for it in the face of the fort.

Captain Nicholson realized that it would be the end if the upper exhaust of No. 3 cylinder failed now, for with the electric engines gone, running on the surface with the Diesels was the only hope. He acted on the instant.

The submarine rose rapidly to the surface, and when well awash, the engines were started at full speed. The hatches were opened and the ventilating

fans started, blowing out the gases and letting in the cold, damp air. All on board drew a deep breath of this invigorating air, and then Captain Nicholson turned his attention to escaping from beneath the big guns of the fort.

From his place in the conning tower he could plainly see the activity of the fort when the lookout made out the submarine. Now the two lads, at a sign from the commander, joined him.

Glancing in the direction he pointed, they made out the fighting tops of the first two cruisers, victims of the submarine's daring raid, just reaching out of the water. The third cruiser was afloat, but from her heavy list to starboard, it was plain that she was badly damaged and sinking fast.

The fort was getting the range now, and shells fell all around the Y-3. One struck the water nearby, hurling water over the conning tower and drenching the three who stood there.

"Well," said Captain Nicholson, "they may get us, but we got three of them."

"And there is some satisfaction in that, anyhow," said Frank.

"You bet there is," Jack agreed.

The submarine was halfway across the bar, and had not been hit, and every instant meant that much more chance for life. The helmsman stuck nobly to his post, head down, and without a look at the fort. The submarine shook and trembled with the

vibrations of the hard-pushed engines, straining to get the submarine to deep water.

The gallant lads in the engine-room were doing their best. A shell from long range, with most of its force expended, glanced off the port bow of the submarine, carrying away the towing pennant. The nose of the Y-3 ducked under a bit, but came up serenely in half a second.

The commander of the vessel, perceiving deep water ahead, encouraged the helmsman with a cry. Already the vessel was almost over the bar. The fire from the fort was decreasing. Only the longer range guns could come into play now.

Looking back, the lads saw two destroyers racing in the wake of the submarine, preceded by a small gunboat.

The first shells of the gunboat whizzed by the submarine. Captain Nicholson slammed down the hatch.

"Water armor for us!" he cried.

A moment later the submarine was on the safe haven of the bottom with 111 feet of solid protecting water between it and hostile shells.

"That was pretty ticklish," said Frank, drawing a breath when they were out of reach of the gunboat's fire.

"It was," was the commander's response, "and we are not safe yet by any means."

"Why——?" began Frank.

"We can't go up again now, can we?" demanded Captain Nicholson. "We shall have to stay down here until they believe we have escaped. Then we will rise and try to sneak out."

"But surely we are safe enough down here."

"Don't you believe it. They'll trawl for us all day; but luckily for us they don't know we have lost our batteries, so they'll probably search over a wide area, and we run that much more chance of not being discovered."

"But surely no shell would reach us here," said Frank.

"No," replied the commander grimly, "but if they discover us, they are likely to dump a few barge loads of pig iron or something down on us and crush our steel plating."

But the submarine was not discovered by the enemy—and remained below the water all the rest of the day—"went to sleep on the bottom," as the phrase goes. And that is what literally was done, for all on board were tired out.

An hour after sunset, the Y-3 came once more to the surface. There was no sign of an enemy. The sky was still banked with heavy clouds, and there was a choppy sea running.

Captain Nicholson started to run for safety at full speed ahead. Having no batteries for submerged running now, the Y-3 had to remain on top of the water, or else sink to the bottom and lie

still; and for this reason Captain Nicholson kept prepared for a quick submersion.

Mines were the worst dangers the Y-3 had to encounter now, and a careful watch was kept and the speed of the vessel reduced. Twice the vessel was picked up by the searchlight on the fort, and each time submerged.

But the engines stood up well, and at last Captain Nicholson said quietly to the two lads:

"Well, we're safe at last."

"Good," said Frank, "but I wouldn't have missed this experience for a fortune."

"Nor I," declared Frank.

"You take my advice," said Captain Nicholson, as he headed the Y-3 for the spot where they had left the *Sylph* almost 40 hours before, "and stay on the top. Don't spend any more time on a submarine than you have to."

CHAPTER XXVII.

CRUISING AGAIN.

It seemed long hours to Frank and Jack before they once more made out the form of the *Sylph,* still cruising slowly to and fro close to where they had left her nearly two days before. The submarine drew up to her rapidly, and soon Captain Nicholson ordered a small boat launched.

Into this climbed first a seaman, then Captain Nicholson and Frank and Jack. Lord Hastings greeted the boys warmly as they dropped over the rail of the *Sylph.*

"I was beginning to fear something had gone wrong," he said. "I certainly am glad to see you back safe and sound. Was the raid a success?"

"It was indeed," replied Frank.

"Three Turkish cruisers sent to the bottom," said Jack briefly.

"Good!" cried Lord Hastings enthusiastically. "And the submarine wasn't damaged, eh?"

"Oh, yes, it was," broke in Captain Nicholson, and proceeded to relate the details of the encounter.

"And how did the two lads behave themselves?" questioned Lord Hastings.

"Admirably," was Captain Nicholson's reply. "We were in a pretty ticklish situation for a moment, but they never lost their nerve."

The lads blushed at this praise.

"Well," said Captain Nicholson, after some further talk, "I guess I shall have to say good-by."

He shook hands all around, and was soon on his way back to his own vessel. Immediately the *Sylph* was got under way, and proceeded on her course westward. But she had gone hardly a mile when the wireless operator rushed up to Lord Hastings, and handed him a message.

"Relayed by the *Gloucester* and *Terror,* sir," he said.

Lord Hastings read the message:

"Strong German squadron somewhere off coast of South America. British fleet on watch. Get in touch."

The message was signed by Winston Spencer Churchill, first Lord of the Admiralty.

Lord Hastings pursed his lips and whistled expressively.

"Another long cruise," he said briefly.

Soon the *Sylph's* head was turned toward the South, and for several days thereafter she pursued her uneventful way down the coast of South Africa. Rounding the Cape of Good Hope, she steamed straight for the distant coast of South America.

Lord Hastings stopped to coal once or twice, and

so it was some days before the lookout picked up land ahead.

"Should be the Argentine coast, if we have not drifted off our course," Lord Hastings informed the two lads.

He was right, and the following day the *Sylph* put in at one of the small South American ports for coal.

"We'll have the ship looked over a bit," said Lord Hastings. "We are permitted to stay in this port 24 hours, and at the expiration of that time we must leave or be interned."

It was in this place that Lord Hastings and the members of the *Sylph's* crew learned of the disaster that had overtaken several British cruisers in those parts. Here, for the first time, they heard of the defeat of a small British squadron by the Germans, and of the death of Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock, who had gone down fighting to the last.

"Never fear," said Lord Hastings, "Sir Christopher's loss shall be avenged, and that shortly, or I am badly mistaken."

The following day the *Sylph* put to sea again, and headed down the Argentine coast.

It was late the next afternoon, when the wireless operator aboard the *Sylph* picked up a message.

"German squadron some place near, sir," he said laconically, as he handed a message to Lord Hastings.

The commander of the *Sylph* glanced at the message. In regular maritime code, it read:

"Close in."

"I haven't been able to pick up the position of the ship that sent that, sir," the operator volunteered.

"If you can do so," said Lord Hastings, "let me know immediately."

"Do you know what German ships are supposed to be in these waters?" Jack asked of Lord Hastings.

"Why, yes," was the latter's reply. "The armored cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau,* the former the flagship of Admiral Count von Spee, and the protected cruisers *Leipzig, Dresden* and *Nurnberg.* Why?"

"Well," Jack explained, "judging by the message just picked up, they must be separated. Couldn't we, by representing ourselves as one of these vessels, possibly pick up a little useful information?"

"By Jove!" said Lord Hastings. "We could."

"But how are we to know which ship sent that message?" asked Frank. "We wouldn't want to make a mistake, and we might try to pass ourselves off as the very cruiser that flashed that message."

"The message was undoubtedly sent from the flagship," said Lord Hastings, "so we are safe enough there. Come with me."

He led the way to the wireless room, where the

operator was making unsuccessful efforts to pick up more messages from the air.

Now, at Lord Hastings' direction, he tapped his key.

"Scharnhorst! Scharnhorst!" the instrument called through the air.

There was no reply, and the call was repeated.

"Scharnhorst! Scharnhorst!"

A moment later and there was a faint clicking of the *Sylph's* apparatus. The call was being answered. The operator wrote it off.

"What ship is that? Admiral von Spee orders all to close in," and the exact position of the German flagship was given.

"Dresden!" flashed back Lord Hastings. "Signed, Koehler."

"I happen to know Captain Koehler commands the *Dresden,"* Lord Hastings confided to the boys.

He sent another message to the German admiral:

"Where are you headed?"

"Falkland Islands," came back the answer.

"To attack the British?" was the message Lord Hastings sent through the air.

"Will sink one British ship in harbor and destroy wireless plant," was the answer to this query.

"Good!" said Lord Hastings to the lads. "We now know his objective point, and if we could pick up the English fleet we would be prepared to receive them."

"Is there a British fleet in these waters?" asked Jack, in some surprise.

"Yes," replied the commander of the *Sylph*. "Vice Admiral Sir Frederick Sturdee, chief of the war staff, is hereabouts with a powerful fleet. The fact has been generally kept a secret, but I am in possession of that much information."

"Do you make the Germans' position closer to the Falkland Islands than ours?" asked Frank.

"No," replied Lord Hastings. "Judging by the action of the wireless, I should say we are fifty miles closer."

"Then," said Frank, "why cannot we make a dash for the Islands? We can put in there and give warning. Besides, it may be that some of the British fleet is near there."

"A good idea," replied Lord Hastings. "It shall be acted upon at once."

Under full speed the *Sylph* dashed forward toward the Islands.

"I don't expect we shall pick up the Falklands before morning," said Lord Hastings, "and we shall have to keep a sharp lookout to-night, for we are likely to bump into a German cruiser prowling about here some place."

"*Scharnhorst* trying to raise the *Dresden* again," said the wireless operator to Lord Hastings, with a grin.

"Let her try," replied Lord Hastings. "Guess

Admiral von Spee will think it funny he gets no reply, but he'll think it funnier still when he finally does raise the *Dresden* and learns that it was not she who answered his other call."

And it was not long until the real *Dresden* did reply. The *Sylph's* operator picked up the messages that were exchanged.

"*Dresden,* Koehler!" came the response to one of the flagship's calls.

"What is the matter?" came the query. "Why did you cease communicating?"

"Don't understand," was the reply. "Have not communicated with you before."

"Didn't you acknowledge my call fifteen minutes ago?"

"No!"

Even the ticking of the wireless instrument now grew nervous, and it was plain that the sender was laboring under stress.

"Received message signed '*Dresden,* Koehler,' fifteen minutes ago," came from the flagship. "Did you send it?"

"No," was the reply flashed back. "Picked you up now for the first time."

"Enemy must have picked up call and answered then," flashed the flagship. "Heed only code messages in future, and answer in kind."

Thereafter, although the operator picked up the messages passing between the two ships, they were

only a jumble. In spite of all attempts of Lord Hastings and the two lads to decipher the code, they remained in ignorance of further communication between the enemy's ships.

"Well," said Lord Hastings. "We have scared them up a little bit, anyhow."

"I should say we have," replied Jack. "They don't know whether we are one or a dozen."

"But," said Frank, "they probably will make for the Falklands now faster than ever."

"Right," replied Lord Hastings, "and it's up to us to get there well ahead of them."

"Other cruisers coming within zone, sir," reported the wireless operator.

"Can you make out their conversation?" inquired Lord Hastings.

"No, sir," was the reply. "They have reported to the flagship, and after being warned, have continued in code."

"Did you pick up their identities?"

"Yes, sir. Besides the *Dresden,* the *Gneisenau, Leipzig* and *Nurnberg* have reported."

"That's all of 'em," said Lord Hastings dryly, "and they make a pretty powerful squadron. Here's where we have to begin to hustle."

The *Sylph* seemed to go forward even faster than before.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TRAPPING THE ENEMY.

"LAND ahead!" came the cry of the lookout.

It was now early morning, and Lord Hastings, Jack and Frank stood on the bridge taking a breath of the fresh, invigorating air.

Glasses were quickly leveled, and soon the distant shore was made out.

"What port are we making for, sir?" asked Jack.

"Port Stanley," was Lord Hastings' reply.

Rapidly the *Sylph* steamed on, and finally, rounding into the little harbor, they made out a welcome and unexpected sight. Frank and Jack cried out in surprise, and even Lord Hastings was moved to an expression of wonder.

In the little harbor, screened from the sea, riding gently on the swell of the tide, were eight British ships of war!

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Frank joyfully, doing a little clog dance on the bridge, "won't we give it to the Germans now!"

Jack was equally as enthusiastic, though he was

not given to such outbursts of emotion, being naturally more quiet.

"It looks like the end of the German squadron to me," he said simply.

As the *Sylph* steamed into the little harbor, one of the British war vessels turned slightly, and a shell screamed over the *Sylph's* bow.

"Want to know who we are," explained Lord Hastings.

The British ensign was quickly run up, and there followed a loud cheer from the sailors of the fleet.

On the ship closest to shore flew the flag of Vice-Admiral Sturdee.

"I guess I had better pay my respects to the admiral at once," said Lord Hastings. "Would you boys care to come with me?"

"Nothing would please us more," replied Frank, speaking for both.

The *Sylph* steamed close to the British fleet, and then the three put off for the flagship in a small boat. Aboard, they were shown immediately to the admiral's cabin, where the nearness of the German squadron was rapidly related.

"Fortunate!" cried Admiral Sturdee. "I feared I would have to chase them all over the sea. I didn't expect them to come to me. Have you a plan to suggest, Lord Hastings?"

"I fear, Sir Frederick," replied Lord Hastings, "that if you put to sea to give battle, the Germans

will turn and flee upon recognizing the power of the British fleet."

"True," mused the admiral.

"May I offer a suggestion, Sir Frederick?" asked Jack.

The admiral glanced at the lad sharply, but Jack bore up bravely under the close scrutiny.

"Speak, sir," ordered the admiral.

"Then I would suggest, sir," said Jack, "that one of your cruisers be sent out so the enemy may be able to get a bare glimpse of her. Believing that she is alone, they undoubtedly will approach to attack. Let the cruiser, retiring slowly, give battle. When she has drawn the enemy close enough, the remainder of the fleet can make a dash and nab the Germans before they have time to flee."

"An excellent plan!" cried the admiral, springing to his feet. "It shall be put into execution."

With a wave of his hand he signified that the interview was over, and Frank, Jack and Lord Hastings made their way back to the *Sylph*.

That Admiral Sturdee was a man of action became apparent in a few moments. Unaware just how far off the German squadron was, Sir Frederick took the necessary steps immediately.

Less than an hour after Lord Hastings and the two lads had returned aboard the *Sylph*, the British battleship *Canopus* got under way, and steaming

away from her sister ships, made for the entrance to the little harbor, going slowly.

Here she took up her position, steaming slowly back and forth. As yet, however, there was no sign of the enemy. Meantime, other vessels in the fleet continued to coal swiftly. Steam was gotten up and every ship prepared for action.

Against the German fleet of five ships—the armored cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* and the protected cruisers *Leipzig, Dresden* and *Nurnberg,* accompanied by two colliers—the British admiral, besides the *Sylph,* would go into battle with eight ships of war—the battle cruisers *Invincible* and *Inflexible,* the former Admiral Sturdee's flagship, the cruisers *Kent, Cornwall, Carnarvon, Bristol* and *Glasgow,* and the battleship *Canopus.*

At Sir Frederick's command, every sailor in the English fleet was given a light meal, and then each man took a cold bath. Following this, those who were not on watch, turned in for a brief rest. And to show the hardihood and bravery of the British tar, there was not a man who showed signs of nervousness or fear.

There was a signal from the *Canopus*—a signal by flags, for the British did not wish to betray their presence by the use of the wireless, which could be as easily picked up by the enemy.

"Enemy approaching," read the signal.

Admiral Sturdee signaled back.

"Engage him when he has approached so close that he believes you are unable to get away."

The commander of the *Canopus* signified his understanding of this command, and continued steaming to and fro, ostensibly guarding the harbor.

At last the first gray form of a German cruiser came within sight of those on the *Sylph.* It was steaming slowly forward, apparently in no hurry and secure in its belief that there was no enemy near to be feared.

The *Sylph* had been stripped for action with the rest of the British fleet, for Lord Hastings had no mind to keep out of the battle.

"We've come a long ways to see an engagement," he told the lads, "and I think we are entitled to a hand in the affair."

"Hurrah!" shouted Frank.

"Good!" said Jack, quietly. "I was afraid we would have to stand off and look on."

"That's what I was afraid of, too," declared Frank.

"Well, we won't," said Lord Hastings. "Not this time, at any rate. I guess you will see all the fighting you wish presently."

Still the German squadron came on, apparently unconscious of the presence of the British battleship *Canopus,* the only English vessel that could be seen from the open sea. All seven ships—five

vessels of war and the two colliers—could be plainly discerned now.

"What's the matter with 'em?" demanded Frank. "Surely they can see the *Canopus*."

"I guess they are figuring she hasn't spotted them yet," said Jack. "Believing he has only one enemy to contend with, Admiral von Spee evidently is trying to get as close as possible without being seen."

Indeed, this seemed a plausible explanation. At any rate, in lieu of a more reasonable one, it answered. Men on the *Canopus* now rushed hurriedly to and fro, officers darted hither and thither. The *Canopus* was ready for instant battle.

All the other ships of the British fleet also had come to life. Men who had been sleeping hurried to their posts. The gun crews stood at their places, the range finders were at their posts, and the officers stood ready to repeat the signal for advance as soon as Admiral Sturdee should give it.

Stripped to the waists, in spite of the chilly atmosphere outside, the crew of the *Sylph* also was ready. There was grim determination written plainly on the face of every man. In spite of the apparent superiority of the British fleet, each man realized that the battle would be to the death.

They knew that, although surprised, the Germans would not give up without a struggle—that they would battle desperately for supremacy al-

though outnumbered. Confident of their own prowess and marksmanship, they nevertheless did not discount the ability of the foe.

"It will be a furious battle," said Lord Hastings to the lads, who stood beside him.

"I have an idea," said Frank, "that when the enemy finds he is outnumbered, he will not engage all his ships, but will try to protect the flight of most of them with one or two."

"By Jove!" said Lord Hastings. "I hadn't considered such a contingency. I wouldn't be surprised if you have hit it."

"I believe he has," said Jack.

"Well," said Lord Hastings grimly, "we will make that our business. Admiral Sturdee can take care of the fighting part of the fleet, and we will try to intercept any vessel that tries to escape."

"But do you suppose we can?" asked Frank.

"We can try," replied the commander of the *Sylph,* with slightly compressed lips. "As soon as the Germans engage the *Canopus,* we will try to get out ahead of the rest of the fleet and, keeping out of the thick of battle, steam to sea. Then if any of the enemy try to get away, with our superior speed we can at least head them off and engage them until help arrives."

"A first-class plan," Jack agreed. "However, I shouldn't be surprised if Admiral Sturdee had anticipated such a maneuver by the enemy."

"Even if he has," said Lord Hastings, "we probably wouldn't be selected to accomplish the work, and that's what we want to do. Therefore, we will act without being ordered."

"Good," said Jack.

In the meantime the German fleet had been approaching steadily. It was apparent that the presence of the British battleship *Canopus,* in the entrance to the harbor, had at last been discovered. A wireless message flashed through the air.

"Surrender or I shall sink you!" it read.

"An Englishman never surrenders!" was the reply flashed back by the commander of the *Canopus.*

The German admiral tried again.

"I would avoid all unnecessary loss of life," he signaled.

"Thanks," was the laconic response of the *Canopus.* "We are able to take care of ourselves."

To this there was no reply, and still the German squadron came on without firing a shot.

"Wonder why they don't shoot?" asked Jack.

"Guess they want to get as close as possible first," replied Frank. "Remember, they believe they have only one to deal with."

"True," said Jack. "But why doesn't the *Canopus* fire?"

"I suppose," replied Frank, "it's because the commander wishes to draw the enemy so close that escape will be impossible."

And the lad had hit upon the exact reason. Mindful of his instructions to draw the enemy in as close as possible before engaging him, the commander of the *Canopus* had no mind to open the battle.

And ever the German squadron was steaming closer and closer to destruction. But there is an end to everything, and so there finally came an end to this inaction.

"Boom!"

A single German gun had opened the battle.

There was no reply from the *Canopus.*

"Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!"

Two of the enemy's ships cut loose at the *Canopus.*

Still the British battleship did not reply.

But the Germans had not yet found the range, and the *Canopus* was untouched, although several shells struck near her.

Then: "Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!"

The *Canopus* had at last opened fire on her foes. And, even as the first British shell sped across the water, the *Canopus* turned and began to retreat.

Fearful of losing their prey, the German vessels increased their speed and steamed rapidly after her, their big guns continuing to hurl shells across the water.

The *Canopus* was replying gun for gun, now, and with each moment the roar of battle increased.

And then, suddenly, in perfect battle formation,

imposing and majestic in their advance, out of the little harbor steamed proudly the battle fleet of Great Britain, moving swiftly forward to engage the enemy!

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE ENGAGEMENT.

The enemy perceived the advance of this formidable squadron in an instant, and there was a lull in the fire of the German ships. Then the guns opened with redoubled vigor, and the entire German fleet turned to flee.

Not unwilling to take advantage of the apparent fact that they had but one enemy to encounter—the *Canopus*—now that the odds were somewhat against them there was a different story. Evidently the German admiral held five German ships against one British vessel fair odds, but he was not minded to have the odds eight to five against him.

But the German fleet, secure in the belief that it had but one enemy to contend with, had advanced too far. Escape now was impossible. The greater speed of the British ships became apparent as the chase continued, the English ever gaining.

At last, realizing that there was no hope of escape, Admiral von Spee turned to give battle. The *Scharnhorst, Gneisenau* and *Leipzig* immediately formed in battle line.

Immediately the British ships slowed up. The

Nurnberg and *Dresden,* the two smaller German cruisers, did not join the other three German ships in battle formation, but continued their flight.

This was what those on board the *Sylph* had expected, and the little scout cruiser, making a slight detour, to avoid, as far as possible, shells from the three German cruisers, started in pursuit, full speed ahead. The German vessels, however, had considerable of a start, and it was plain that the *Sylph* would not overhaul them for hours.

In the meantime the battle was raging fiercely. From the first the British concentrated their fire on the German flagship. The huge thirty-four centimeter guns of the British fleet, as against the twenty-one centimeter guns of the enemy, made the outcome of the engagement certain from the first. All that remained was to see how well the Germans could fight, and what damage they could inflict on Admiral Sturdee's fleet before being sent to the bottom.

A huge shell from the British flagship dropped squarely aboard the *Scharnhorst* and exploded with a deafening detonation. Metal and bodies flew high in the air, shattered, and dropped into the sea for yards around. But the *Scharnhorst* had not been hit in a vital spot, and she continued to fight back desperately.

Now a shell from the *Canopus* struck the *Scharnhorst* amidships; a second from the *Inflexible* and a

third from the *Invincible* followed in quick succession, and every one went home. The marksmanship of the British gunners was remarkable.

But the British were not escaping unscathed. A shell from the *Leipzig* struck the *Cornwall* just below the waterline, and pierced her armor, and then exploded. Two men were killed by flying pieces of steel, and several others were wounded. So far this was the only loss sustained by the English.

As the battle progressed the fire of the British became more and more deadly. Hardly a shot was wasted now. The *Scharnhorst,* wounded unto death, fought back with the courage born of desperation.

A well-directed shell burst aboard the *Invincible,* killing three men outright and maiming practically every member of a gun crew near which it struck. But new men were in their places in a second, and the gun did not even pause in its fire.

Gradually the fire of the *Scharnhorst* became slower and slower, as one after another her guns were silenced by the accurate fire of the British gunners.

Then came the sound of a terrific explosion aboard the German flagship, and she staggered perceptibly. There was a lull in the British fire, as a demand was made for the *Scharnhorst* to surrender.

The German admiral hurled back a message of

defiance to his foes, and the few remaining guns on his flagship continued to spout fire and smoke. He had determined to fight to the last, and go down with his ship, if need be.

The fire from the British ships, the demand for surrender having been refused, broke out afresh, and finally, struck in a vital part, the *Scharnhorst* burst into flames, at the same time beginning to settle in the water.

Admiral Sturdee could not but admire the way in which the German sailors stuck to their posts in the face of certain death, and he ordered the fire against the *Scharnhorst* to cease, that those on board might have a chance for life.

But of this chance neither the German admiral nor his men would take advantage. There were still several guns fit for action, and these continued to rain shells at the British. And, as the ship burned like a raging furnace, at the same time settling lower and lower in the water, these brave men continued to fire their guns.

Now the last gun had either been silenced or had disappeared below the water. Admiral von Spee appeared upon deck, in full view of his enemies. His officers and surviving members of the crew gathered about him. The sweet music of a band carried across the water. The Germans stood erect about their commander, as the flames crept close and the ship settled.

Suddenly it was all over. With a startling movement the *Scharnhorst* disappeared beneath the waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Her commander and crew had stood with bared heads to the last, and had gone to death, standing as though drawn up for inspection. There was a faint cheer from them as the ship disappeared beneath the waves.

The sinking of the German flagship *Scharnhorst* had required just a few minutes less than an hour.

Now the entire British fleet concentrated its fire upon the *Gneisenau.* In spite of the loss of the flagship and their admiral, the Germans would not give up; in fact, they seemed determined to rejoin their companions in the world beyond a watery grave.

The fire from both German cruisers became fiercer. Shells played a merry tattoo on the armored sides of the *Canopus,* upon which the two German cruisers were concentrating their fire, but the shells rattled harmlessly off the well-protected sides, and the *Canopus* was not damaged.

Gradually now the British squadron closed in on the *Gneisenau* and *Leipzig,* spreading out in a half circle as they advanced. Both German ships had been vitally wounded, but they continued to fight back gamely. Shell after shell burst on their decks, pierced them below the waterline, or carried away their fighting tops or superstructure.

Battered almost to pieces, and their decks strewn with dead and dying, they nevertheless fought on.

There would be no surrender. This fact was apparent to the British, and they directed their fire so as to end the battle as quickly as possible.

The *Gneisenau* staggered, and seemed about to go under. She recovered her equilibrium in an instant, however, and renewed the battle with even greater vigor than before.

Now the two German cruisers, crippled and battered as they were, steamed as rapidly as they could right toward the British fleet, making a final effort to inflict a serious blow upon the British before themselves going to the bottom.

Closer and closer they came, their guns hurling shells at all the British vessels without favor. A shell struck squarely upon the bridge of the *Canopus,* killing an officer; and the splintering wood that flew about accounted for two more, making the British death list now eight.

And still the German cruisers came on; and then the *Gneisenau* wavered, halted and staggered back. A shell had pierced through to her boilers. There was an explosion, followed by a great hissing sound.

Without steam the *Gneisenau* could steam neither forward nor backward. Stationary, rising and falling on the swell of the waves, she continued to pour in her fire, even as the *Leipzig* continued on alone.

A British shell struck the *Leipzig's* steering gear, rendering it useless, and the German cruiser stag-

gered about at the mercy of the sea. Still the gunners continued to hurl shells at the British whenever the guns could be brought to bear.

But this was not often, for the fact that she could not be steered properly rendered the work of the British much easier.

Admiral Sturdee, greatly impressed with the bravery of the Germans, decided to give them one more chance for life. He ordered a cessation of firing and called upon the two cruisers to surrender.

The merciful offer was met with a cry of defiance, and a shell burst over the admiral's flagship, dropping half a score of men, two of whom never arose.

Now the British ships closed in on the two German cruisers, and poured broadside after broadside into the almost defenseless hulls.

Suddenly the *Gneisenau* disappeared beneath the waves, with all on board, the last that was heard of her being a cheer from her crew.

The *Leipzig* lasted but a moment longer. She was listing badly, and now, suddenly rising on her beam's end, she dived beneath the water.

The battle of the Falkland Islands, the greatest British sea victory since the battle off Heligoland, was over.

Boats were quickly lowered from the British ships to rescue, if possible, survivors of the German ships. A few were picked up, but not many. Of the more

than 1,800 men aboard the three German cruisers, at least 1,700 had gone to the bottom.

The *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* were the largest cruisers of the German fleet. They were sister ships, of 11,600 tons' displacement, 450 feet on the waterline, and were rated at a speed of 22½ knots. Each carried a complement of 765 men, and was armed with eight 8.2-inch guns, six 6-inch guns, twenty 24-pounders, four machine-guns and four torpedo tubes.

The *Leipzig* had a displacement of 3,250 tons and carried 286 men. She was 341 feet long on the waterline, had a beam of 43½ feet, and was rated at 23 knots. Her largest guns, of which she carried ten, were 4.1-inch. She had also ten 1-pounders, four machine-guns and two torpedo tubes.

And these were the three mighty vessels of the battle fleet of the Emperor of Germany which, after having preyed for months upon British shipping, had finally been sent to the bottom of the Atlantic by Admiral Sir Frederick Sturdee, chief of the British War Staff.

CHAPTER XXX.

RULE BRITANNIA.

MEANWHILE, what of the *Sylph?*

When the German cruisers *Dresden* and *Nurnberg* had fallen back in an attempt to escape, the *Sylph* dashed after them at full speed.

"Will you engage both of them?" asked Frank of Lord Hastings.

"If necessary," replied the *Sylph's* commander. "We at least may be able to hold them off until help arrives."

The *Sylph* sped on; but it became apparent that the *Dresden* was gradually drawing ahead of the *Nurnberg.* Jack noticed this, and spoke to Lord Hastings.

"If we stay well behind, and give them the impression that we are not fast enough to overtake either of them," he said, "the *Dresden* may leave the *Nurnberg* to take care of herself. Then we can get them one at a time."

"A good idea," said Lord Hastings.

The speed of the *Sylph* was reduced somewhat. Still the *Dresden* continued to draw away from her

consort, and, after hours of tireless pursuit, finally was almost out of sight.

All that night the pursuit of the *Nurnberg* continued, and it was early morning, and the sun was streaming over the sea, when the *Sylph,* having increased her speed during the darkness, finally drew within range of the *Nurnberg.*

A shot from the *Sylph's* forward gun brought the *Nurnberg* to a sudden halt, and she turned immediately to give battle. This was what Lord Hastings had hoped for.

The first shell from the *Nurnberg* kicked up the water a good half mile in front of the *Sylph.*

"We have the range of her," said Lord Hastings calmly.

The *Sylph* slowed down, and continued to plump shells and solid shot upon her opponent at long range. Some of these struck home, and it was plain to the two lads, who stood on the bridge, that some of them had done considerable damage.

Realizing that he was outranged, the commander of the *Nurnberg* ordered full speed ahead and dashed toward the *Sylph,* that he might get within range before the *Sylph* had crippled him with her long-distance fire.

Before she managed to get within range, however, her fighting top had been shot away, she had been pierced in vital spots several times and was otherwise very badly crippled.

But now a shell came screaming over the bridge. Involuntarily both lads ducked, so close had the shell passed to their heads. It sped on over the *Sylph* and plowed up the water over the stern.

"Close call," said Jack briefly.

"It was, indeed," agreed Frank.

So close were the two vessels now that the machine-guns on both vessels were brought into play, and a perfect hail of shot fell upon both ships.

So far the *Sylph* had not been hit, but suddenly the little cruiser staggered back. A shot had struck her squarely in the bow. The damage was not serious, and she again leaped forward.

For two hours the battle continued, with advantage to neither side. Both vessels were badly battered by this time, and one of the *Sylph's* smokestacks had been shot away. Now, glancing suddenly astern, Frank uttered a joyous cry.

"British cruiser coming up, sir," he informed Lord Hastings.

The commander of the *Nurnberg* had noticed the approach of the British cruiser at the same instant, and, realizing that he could not successfully battle with another enemy, he ordered the *Nurnberg* put about, and made off as fast as his crippled condition would permit, his stern guns still playing upon the *Sylph.*

Evidently the *Nurnberg's* commander figured that the *Sylph,* being as badly crippled as he was,

could not successfully pursue. The British cruiser was still some distance off, and he hoped to be able to outrun her also.

But he was doomed to disappointment. No sooner had the *Nurnberg* turned to flee, than the *Sylph* made rapidly after her. At the same moment there came a wireless from the British cruiser, which proved to be the *Glasgow*.

"Stick to her close," the message read, "we'll be with you in a jiffy."

So, at Lord Hastings' command, the *Sylph* stuck closely. For perhaps an hour the commander of the *Nurnberg* tried to shake off the pursuer; and then, realizing that this could not be done, and that the *Glasgow* was also rapidly gaining on him, he once more turned to give battle.

The *Nurnberg* came about suddenly and dashed straight at the *Sylph*. In fact, so sudden was this maneuver that the *Sylph* was caught unprepared, and for a moment was at a disadvantage. However, this disadvantage did not last long.

Lord Hastings ordered the *Sylph* put about, and turned to flee.

"What on earth are we running for?" demanded Jack.

"Why," replied Lord Hastings, "if the *Nurnberg* will chase us, we'll run her right up to the *Glasgow*. And, if she puts about and makes off again, we have gained just that much time."

"I see," said Jack.

The *Nurnberg* refused to chase the *Sylph*. Instead, she put about and continued her flight. Immediately the *Sylph* was after her again. Once more the *Nurnberg* came about and made a dash at the *Sylph,* and again the *Sylph* turned and ran.

But this time the *Nurnberg* did not turn to run again. Lord Hastings' maneuver had succeeded so well that the *Glasgow* was now within striking distance, and a shell fired at long range dropped close to the *Nurnberg.* The *Sylph* came about again and dashed forward, hurling her instruments of death at her opponent as rapidly as her crippled condition would permit.

From the *Glasgow* came a command for the *Nurnberg* to surrender, but the commander of the German ship did not even take the trouble to reply to this message. The *Sylph* and her enemy came close together rapidly.

Shells were dropping aboard both vessels, and it seemed miraculous that both did not go to the bottom. The blood of both commanders was up, and neither would give an inch. It all depended now upon which ship was struck in a vital spot first.

Fortunately for those aboard the *Sylph* it was the German who suffered. A shell pierced the *Nurnberg's* side and penetrated the engine-room, where it exploded the *Nurnberg's* boilers with a

thundering roar. On the instant the *Nurnberg* seemed to turn into a sheet of flame.

Another explosion followed, and still another, and almost quicker than it takes to tell it, the German cruiser *Nurnberg,* the fourth of Admiral von Spee's fleet, disappeared beneath the waves.

While the *Sylph* lay waiting for the *Glasgow* to come up a hasty examination was made. One man had been killed and two injured. That was the extent of the damage to the *Sylph.* Every man of the German crew of 300 men had gone to the bottom.

"Nothing serious the matter with us, sir," Jack reported, after an investigation.

"Good!" replied Lord Hastings.

"Nothing broken that cannot be fixed in two hours, sir," Frank reported.

"Good!" exclaimed Lord Hastings again.

Half an hour later the commander of the *Glasgow* came aboard the *Sylph,* and was speedily closeted with Lord Hastings in the latter's cabin. Soon, however, the two emerged on deck, and approached where Frank and Jack were standing.

"I understand," said the commander of the *Glasgow* to the two lads, "that it was your plan Admiral Sturdee acted upon when he lured the German fleet to give battle. Also that it was your idea that has resulted in the sinking of the *Nurnberg.* I am glad to know you."

He extended a hand to each, and the boys grasped them heartily.

"Now," continued the commander of the *Glasgow,* "it is up to us to follow and sink the *Dresden.* Besides her there is but one German ship in these waters—the *Karlsruhe,* and we'll get her before we are through."

"Have you any idea where she is?" asked Frank.

"I imagine she has gone around the Horn into the Pacific."

"In that case," said Jack, the *Dresden* has probably gone to join her."

"By Jove!" exclaimed the commander of the *Glasgow.* "I believe you are right. What do you think, Lord Hastings?"

"I believe Mr. Templeton has hit the nail on the head, as usual," replied the commander of the *Sylph.* "Therefore, I should say that we had better head in that direction."

"Agreed!" returned the commander of the *Glasgow,* and, after some further talk, he put over the side and returned to his own vessel.

Several hours were now spent on board the *Sylph* repairing the damage caused by the German shells and getting the little vessel in shipshape again. Then, at last, the *Sylph* was once more under way, heading for the Pacific.

A mile to the stern followed the British cruiser *Glasgow.* For two days and nights, after rounding

the Horn, the two British vessels sought some trace of the *Karlsruhe* and the *Dresden.* They put into port after port, but could get no trace of her.

But at last they came upon the German cruiser. It was the fourth day after rounding the Horn, and the German ship was just putting out of a little Chilean port. The commander was not unaware of the presence of the British ships outside, for it had been reported to him; but he had already been in the port for twenty-four hours, and the laws of neutrality demanded that he either put to sea again or that his ship be interned.

Captain Koehler, of the *Dresden,* was a man of action. Therefore, he spurned the suggestion of having his ship interned. And his last words to the German consul, as he stepped aboard his ship and ordered that she be put to sea were:

"We are going to join our comrades!"

Well out of neutral waters, the *Sylph* and the *Glasgow* lay in wait for the enemy. Outside the port the *Dresden* attempted to flee; but, after an hour's chase, Captain Koehler realized the futility of this, and, at last brought to bay, turned to fight.

In the action that followed, an action that lasted for more than two hours, the *Dresden* put up a terrific battle. But there could be but one end. Outnumbered, she fought well, but at length the waters of the calm Pacific closed over her.

"Only one left," said Frank to Jack, as they stood

upon the bridge after the sinking of the *Dresden.*

"Only one—the *Karlsruhe.*"

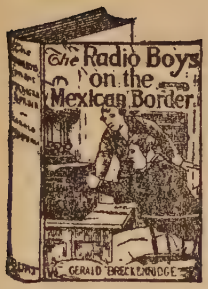
"And we'll get her, too!" said Jack quietly.

Slowly the two British cruisers, the *Sylph* and the *Glasgow,* their damages having been repaired, turned their noses north, and set out on their search for the only German vessel remaining in American waters.

As they sail away over the mysterious Pacific we shall for a brief period take our leave of Frank Chadwick and Jack Templeton, than whom no more courageous lads (nor men, either, for that matter) engaged in the greatest war of all history.

But we shall meet them again; and, if the readers of this volume are interested in their further adventures and exploits, as well as in the personal side of the great war, they will find it all in the third volume of The Boy Allies with the Battleships Series, entitled, "The Boy Allies with the Flying Squadron; or The Naval Raiders of the Great War."

THE END.



The Radio Boys Series

BY GERALD BRECKENRIDGE

A new series of copyright titles for boys of all ages.

Cloth Bound, with Attractive Cover Designs

PRICE, 60 CENTS EACH

THE RADIO BOYS ON THE MEXICAN BORDER

THE RADIO BOYS ON SECRET SERVICE DUTY

THE RADIO BOYS WITH THE REVENUE GUARDS

THE RADIO BOYS' SEARCH FOR THE INCA'S TREASURE

THE RADIO BOYS RESCUE THE LOST ALASKA EXPEDITION

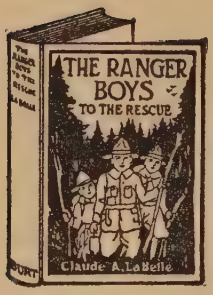
THE RADIO BOYS IN DARKEST AFRICA

THE RADIO BOYS SEEK THE LOST ATLANTIS

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the Publishers

A. L. BURT COMPANY

114-120 EAST 23rd STREET NEW YORK



The Ranger Boys Series

BY CLAUDE H. LA BELLE

A new series of copyright titles telling of the adventures of three boys with the Forest Rangers in the state of Maine.

Handsome Cloth Binding.

PRICE, 60 CENTS EACH.

THE RANGER BOYS TO THE RESCUE

THE RANGER BOYS FIND THE HERMIT

THE RANGER BOYS AND THE BORDER SMUGGLERS

THE RANGER BOYS OUTWIT THE TIMBER THIEVES

THE RANGER BOYS AND THEIR REWARD

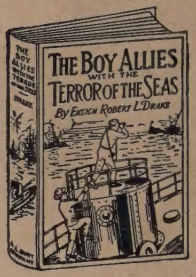
For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the Publishers.

A. L. BURT COMPANY

114-120 East 23rd Street, New York

FASCINATING WAR STORIES FOR BOYS

THE BOY ALLIES WITH THE NAVY



(Registered in the United States Patent Office.)

By ENSIGN ROBERT L. DRAKE

A Series of Stories of the Adventures of Two Boys in the Great European War

Handsome Cloth Binding

PER COPY

The Boy Allies on the North Sea Patrol; or, Striking the First Blow at the German Fleet.
The Boy Allies Under Two Flags; or, Sweeping the Enemy From the Seas.
The Boy Allies with the Flying Squadron; or, The Naval Raiders of the Great War.
The Boy Allies with the Terror of the Seas; or, The Last Shot of Submarine D-16.
The Boy Allies Under the Sea; or, The Vanishing Submarine.
The Boy Allies in the Baltic; or, Through Fields of Ice to Aid the Czar.
The Boy Allies at Jutland; or, The Greatest Naval Battle of History.
The Boy Allies with Uncle Sam's Cruisers; or, Convoying the American Army Across the Atlantic.
The Boy Allies with the Submarine D-32; or, The Fall of the Russian Empire.
The Boy Allies with the Victorious Fleets; or, The Fall of the German Navy.

THE BOY ALLIES WITH THE ARMY

(Registered in the United States Patent Office.)

By CLAIR W. HAYES

The Adventures of Two Boys with The Allies in the Greatest War in World's History

Handsome Cloth Binding

PER COPY

The Boy Allies at Leige; or, Through Lines of Steel.
The Boy Allies on the Firing Line; or, Twelve Days' Battle Along the Marne.
The Boy Allies with the Cossacks; or, A Wild Dash Over the Carpathians.
The Boy Allies in the Trenches; or, Midst Shot and Shell Along the Aisne.
The Boy Allies in Great Peril; or, With the Italian Army in the Alps.
The Boy Allies in the Balkan Campaign; or, The Struggle to Save a Nation.
The Boy Allies on the Somme; or, Courage and Bravery Rewarded.
The Boy Allies at Verdun; or, Saving France from the Enemy.
The Boy Allies Under the Stars and Stripes; or, Leading the American Troops to the Firing Line.
The Boy Allies with Haig in Flanders; or, The Fighting Canadians at Vimy Ridge.
The Boy Allies with Pershing in France; or, Over the Top at Chateau Thierry.
The Boy Allies with the Great Advance; or, Driving the Enemy Through France and Belgium.
The Boy Allies with Marshal Foch; or, The Closing Days of the Great World War.

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers,

A. L. BURT COMPANY, 114-120 East 23rd St., New York